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# The Mystery of William Shakespeare

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# THE MYSTERY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
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# THE MYSTERY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A SUMMARY
OF EVIDENCE

BY

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## ERRATA

Page 142, note, for '*Letters of Apology*' read '*Letter of Apology*', *and for* '1567, 1568, 1569' *read* '1597, 1598, and 1599'.

,, 206, *for* 'Declarations', *read* 'Declaration'.

,, 224, *for* 'Dick Hatteraick' *read* 'Dirk Hatteraick'.

,, 254, *for* 'Wincot and Clement Parkes', *read* 'Woncot and Clement Perkes'.

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## *Proem*

Of late years a number of valuable and interesting works on the subject of Shakespeare have issued from the press. With an industry which nothing could exhaust, and a research which nothing could escape, Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has furnished us in his *Outlines* with 'an authentic collection of all the known facts respecting the personal and literary history of the great dramatist.' Mr. Sidney Lee, who, in his *Life of Shakespeare*, for the moment, has superseded Mr. Phillipps in popular regard, has given us a most interesting account of the Elizabethan Sonneteers, and has shown, in opposition to the received opinion, that the Sonnets of Shakespeare were addressed to Lord Southampton. Mr. Wyndham, amid his preoccupations as a politician, has found time to publish an edition of Shakespeare's Poems, in which he too has given us a valuable reading on



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the Sonnets, and, differing from Mr. Lee, regards them as addressed to the young lord who was afterwards the Earl of Pembroke. Mr. Castle, one of His Majesty's Counsel, in his *Study*, has followed the footsteps and completed the work of Lord Campbell on the legal acquirements of Shakespeare, and has advanced a novel and ingenious theory on the subject. Mr. Justice Madden, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin, claims to have discovered the 'distinctive note' of 'the workmanship of Shakespeare,' and, in his *Diary of Master William Silence*, has interwoven the Poet's allusions to Elizabethan sport in a romance which in point of interest may be compared to *Queenhoo-Hall*, as animated by the magic wand of Scott. And, last and not least, Mr. Swinburne, in his *Study of Shakespeare* has shown the laborious and elaborate revision to which the Shakespearian Plays were subjected by their author, and has for ever dispelled the notion that the great Poet was insensible to the value of his writings, and indifferent to their fate.

The *Critical Study* of the Professor of Literature in the University of Dublin, after a lapse of thirty years, retains its popularity as an analysis of the 'Mind and Art' of the great Dramatist; but the works which have been mentioned justify, if they do

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not necessitate, a reconsideration of the notions which we are accustomed to entertain of Shakespeare. Nor can we overlook the obligations under which America has laid us in the discussion of all Shakespearian questions. Judge Holmes, Mr. Donnelly, and Mr. Reed have received but scant consideration from the accredited organs of opinion on this side of the Atlantic, but the services which these distinguished writers have rendered to the literature of the subject cannot be ignored. Their predecessors, from the time of Farmer, had confined their attention to the discovery of parallelisms between the works of Shakespeare and the works of the Ancients. The American writers, on the contrary, have directed their efforts, with remarkable success, to the discovery of parallelisms between the works of Shakespeare and the acknowledged works of Bacon; and if they have not succeeded in convincing the world that Bacon and Shakespeare were really one, they have given a powerful stimulus to the study of two of the greatest men that the world has ever seen, if we are still to consider them as two. Moreover, it is not merely the question of the Identity of Shakespeare which is involved in the discussions which they have raised. These discussions involve the question of his Unity, the question of the extent of his Authorship, and



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above all the question whether in the received text we possess his writings 'cur'd and perfect of their limbs' and 'absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.'

In spite of all that has been written, there is a vague feeling of unrest as to Shakespeare in the public mind; and a new study on the subject may, perhaps, be welcomed. Whoever the great dramatist was, we can form no adequate conception of his mind; but what Lord Rosebery says of Napoleon is equally true of Shakespeare. Mankind will always delight to scrutinise something that indefinitely raises its conceptions of its own powers and possibilities, and will seek, though eternally in vain, to penetrate the secret of this prodigious intellect.

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# i

## *Of the Two Shakespearian Problems*

It is strange that, in discussing Shakespearian questions, we must commence with the discussion of a name. In the time of Elizabeth, the name *Shakespeare*, under which the Shakespearian works were published, was to be found, as Mr. Phillipps tells us, in every part of England. In Warwickshire, as appears from contemporary records, the name was spelt in some twenty or thirty different ways, all of them, however, pronounced as *Shaxpere* —a form which it frequently assumed. In the case of the Stratford family the name ultimately crystallised into *Shakspere*. This is shown by the extracts from the Stratford Register, which Mr. Phillipps has given in his *Outlines* (ii. 51), and by the facsimiles with which Mr. Lee has ornamented the Library Edition of his *Life*. The Parish Register of Stratford contains an entry of every event in the domestic life of its famous townsman, and his name appears as *Shakspere* in the entries of his baptism (p. 8), of the baptism of his first child (p. 21),

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of the baptism of his twins (p. 23), of the burial of his only son (p. 149), of the marriage of his elder daughter (p. 216), of the marriage of his younger daughter (p. 219), and of the burial of himself (p. 221). As every one knows, the only specimens of his handwriting that we possess are the two signatures to the deeds which he executed in 1612, the three signatures to the will which he executed in 1616, and the words 'By me,' with which the will is vouched. The three signatures to the will are all but undecipherable, and three different opinions have been expressed as to what they really are; but there can be no difference of opinion as to the signatures of the deeds, a transcript of which is given by Mr. Phillipps (ii. 34, 36). In the body of the deeds, and in the delivery clause of each, the grantee is described by the draftsman as *William Shakespeare*, but when the grantee comes to execute the instruments he does not recognise that form of the name, but signs himself *William Shakspere*. To this spelling, according to Mr. Hallam, there are no exceptions in his autographs, and Mr. Spedding, in his observations on the Northumberland Papers, gives expression to the same opinion. Accordingly, Mr. Coleridge, Professor Dowden, and Mr. Boas adopt the spelling of the owner of the name, while Mr. Swinburne rejects 'the new Shakspere' as '*a novus homo*,' with whom he has no desire to be acquainted (p. 256). It may be thought that as long as we

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have the Sonnets, the Poems, and the Plays of Shakespeare, it is idle to dispute about a name; but here the dispute about the name involves a dispute about the man. The Legitimist spells an equally famous name as *Buonaparte* to intimate that Napoleon was an Italian, while the Imperialist spell it *Bonaparte* to indicate that he was French; and in a somewhat similar way there is a school of critics who employ the word *Shakspere* to designate the Stratford Player, and reserve the word *Shakespeare* to designate the eminent person whom they regard as the Author of the Plays.

The world has refused to make any such distinction. For well nigh three hundred years it has identified the Player with the Playwright. The feeling with which he is regarded has been consecrated by authority, and has become venerable by the lapse of time. Admiration has risen to reverence, and reverence has been exalted into worship, and the Shakspere cult has overspread the world. Stratford-on-Avon has been converted into a literary Mecca, and thirty thousand pilgrims annually visit its Parish Church as their Caaba.

And yet it is wonderful how little we know of the man we venerate so much; Mr. Hallam, indeed, in his *History of Literature*, declares that we know scarcely anything at all. From his baptism in 1564 to his marriage in 1582 we have no record of his existence. From his marriage in 1582 till his arrival in London in 1587, we know nothing of his circumstances but

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the birth and baptism of his children. From 1587 to 1592 there is not a particle of evidence respecting his career; and from 1592 till his death in 1616, all that we actually know of him is that he was a successful player, that he made money on the stage and invested it in land, that he retired from the stage when he was comparatively young, and that he died in April 1616, without having claimed the authorship of the works associated with his name, and without having shown the slightest interest in their fate.

To fill up the lacunæ of his life a variety of expedients have been adopted. According to Mr. Phillipps, 'literature has been afflicted for many generations by the reception of unscrupulous forgeries, that have corrupted nearly every branch of inquiry which relates to the life or works of the great dramatist' (ii. 161); and of such forgeries Mr. Lee has furnished us with examples in the forged autographs, the forged letters, and the forged entries, which he has exposed in the appendix to his book (pp. 302–6). More innocent, but equally worthless in a biographical point of view, are the fancies in which critics of the highest reputation have indulged. Assuming the famous Player to have been the author of the Plays, they have represented him as being everything that the author must have been. The Plays exhibit a professional knowledge of the Law; and Malone assumed that he was a Lawyer's Clerk. They display a semi-

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professional knowledge of Medicine; and eminent Physicians have converted him into a *Médecin malgrè Lui.* The Plays abound in classical quotations and allusions; and Professor Baynes is of opinion that he was a trained classical Scholar, and that even as a lad at school he was a master of 'conversational and epistolary Latin.' The Plays are full of expressions, French, Spanish, and Italian; and accordingly Mr. Boas maintains that, though he never swam in a gondola, he had acquired a knowledge of two or three European languages. The Plays are wholly exempt from all provincialisms of thought and speech; and Mr. Castle indulges in the pleasant fancy, 'that he went to London as a mere lad, and that he was taken in hand by some high-born and well-bred ladies, who taught him those high notions of the sex which he afterwards embodied in his heroines' (p. 154). Mr. Castle admits that all this is very speculative, not amounting to evidence, but of *that*, he confesses, we have none (p. 153). This is the characteristic of all these fancy Shaksperes. In order to bring the works as we possess them and the reputed author into strict accord, his devotees have made him a Schoolmaster, a Soldier, a Printer, a Courtier, a Lawyer, a Man of Science—an ever-shifting and elusive Proteus. Of all these fancy Shaksperes the most charming is the one presented to us by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin in his *Diary of Master William Silence.* In defiance of

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Martin Droeshout, the Vice-Chancellor gives the young Stratford man a 'lofty cast of features' (p. 13); without any evidence that he ever possessed a horse, or flew a hawk, or halloo'd to a cry of hounds, he makes him 'the hunter, the falconer, and the horseman' (p. 350); and, improving upon Malone, he speculates on 'the occasion of the resolve that robbed Stratford-on-Avon of a sporting Attorney, to give Shakespeare to the world' (p. 163).

If we disregard the dreams of fancy and the tomfooleries of fraud, we can only fall back upon tradition to fill the lacunæ in the life of the most famous, and at the same time the least known, of the inheritors of a vast renown. These traditions, it is true, date from some considerable period after Shakspere's death; but, in the opinion of Mr. Phillipps, we cannot reject them 'unless we adopt the incredible theory that they were altogether gratuitous and foolish inventions' (p. xiii); and he justly observes that 'in the country towns and villages of bygone days, when reading of any kind was the luxury of the few, and intercommunication exceedingly restricted,' the oral history of affairs became 'imprisoned, as it were, in the districts of their occurrence' (p. xiv). Unfortunately all the traditions about the young man are of a degrading character. Tradition informs us that he was apprenticed to a butcher, that he was one of the Bidford topers, that he was a

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poacher on the preserves of Sir Thomas Lucy, that he was compelled to fly from Stratford, that his first employment in London was that of a stableman or horseboy, and that his first connexion with the stage was in the capacity of a servitor or servant. Degrading as they are, these traditions are accepted as authentic by Mr. Phillipps and Mr. Lee, as they were by Rowe and Dr. Johnson.

With such materials to work upon, it is interesting to observe the different ways in which the life of Shakspere has been treated. As there is a flamboyant style of architecture, so there is a flamboyant style of biography, and as a type of the flamboyant style we may take the Life contributed to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* by Professor Baynes, whose reveries, unfortunately, have misled Mr. Wyndham, and caused the only blemish in his admirable Introduction to the Poems. The life of the young Stratford man is invested by Mr. Wyndham with all the colours of romance. He was born in 'the Kingdom of the Marches' (p. xviii), and his boyhood was spent in 'the wild woodland life of Arden' (p. lxxvi). His father, as the descendant of one who had rendered important services to Henry the Seventh, 'persisted in appealing to the Heralds' College for a grant of arms' (p. xxi), and his mother, as the daughter of a 'gentleman of worship,' could 'claim descent from noble stocks' (p. xix). The boy 'went to school

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at seven, and, after grinding at Lily's Grammar, enjoyed such conversation in Latin with his instructors as the Ollendorfs of the period could provide' (p. xxiii). 'The boy of twelve and upwards was given his fill of Ovid, something less of Cicero, Virgil, Terence, Horace, and Plautus, and, perhaps, a modicum of Juvenal, Persius, and Seneca's Tragedies' (p. xxiv). In December 1582, being a youngster of eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, his senior by eight years, who presented him with his eldest child Susanna in the following May—'an adventure of the romantic order,' which was not justified by its success (p. xxv). The 'legends of the drinking-match between rival villages at Bidford, and of the deer-slaying resented by Sir Thomas Lucy,' are assigned by Mr. Wyndham to the period of youth, 'when the blood's lava and the pulse a blaze' (*ibid.*). On his arrival at London we are told that 'he rode straight to the *Theatre* of Burbage,' and, 'claiming the privilege of a fellow-townsman, enrolled himself forthwith in the company of the Earl of Leicester's players' (p. xxvi). 'His friendships with Southampton and William Herbert,' according to his admirer, cannot be omitted 'from any attempt at reconstituting' his life (p. xxix); and when he came to write the *Sonnets* he showed himself an adept in 'the technicalities of the law' (p. cxxxiv), a master of all 'the philosophy of his time' (p. cxxii), and a profound student of 'the eternal processes of

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nature' (*ibid.*). One would think that Mr. Wyndham was describing Bacon.

With this elaborate reconstitution of the life of Shakspere, we may compare his life as given by Mr. Phillipps, the most sober, the most candid, and therefore the most trustworthy of his Biographers. Instead of a Stratford of romance he gives us a Stratford of fetid watercourses, piggeries, and middens (i. 244); and the first item of family history which he gives, is the fact that Johannes *Shakyspere*, with Humfridus Reynoldes, and Adrianus Quyney had made a 'sterquinarium' in the middle of the town (ii. 215). He ridicules the statements which were made on behalf of the family when it was proposed to 'impale the arms of Shakespeare with those of Arden,' and frankly acknowledges that both the father and mother of the Player were descended from obscure English yeomen (i. 162), and that they were so illiterate that they could not write their names (ii. 369). The town was all but destitute of books (i. 52). There was a Grammar School in the place, and in the absence of any evidence on the point, Mr. Phillipps assumes that the lad was sent to school at the early age of seven (i. 51)—more enthusiastic educationists say six. What the curriculum was Mr. Phillipps did not know and did not pretend to say. No biographer of authority has ventured to convert the Stratford Grammar School into an Elizabethan Eton, or to elevate the Stratford lad to the sixth

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form prodigy of Mr. Wyndham. Mr. Phillipps candidly admits that the Player's acquaintance with the Latin language was, throughout his life, of a very limited character (i. 52); and even Mr. Lee confesses that he had no title to rank as a classical scholar (p. 15). And the facts of the case fully justify these conclusions. Shakspere's fellow-townsmen, Sturley and Quiney, may be assumed to have attended the Stratford Grammar School; and their letters, of which transcripts are given by Mr. Phillipps (i. 150, ii. 57), are proof that they were not men of education. Sturley, it is true, in the two letters in which he refers to his countryman as '*Mr. Shaksper*,' and '*Mr. Wm. Shak.*,' interlards his composition with scraps of Latin; but his only recollection of the classics is in the words, 'hic labor, hic opus esset eximie et gloriæ et laudis sibi,' in which Priscian, as Holofernes would say, is undoubtedly a little scratched. Still the letters show that Sturley had *some* Latin, and possibly Shakspere might have had as much, but he could scarcely have had more. For when the lad was twelve or thirteen, we know, from the Stratford Records, that his father was failing in his circumstances, and Mr. Phillipps tells us that he was prematurely removed from school (i. 55). On his leaving school, all the evidence we possess would lead us to believe that he was apprenticed to a butcher; and accordingly into a butcher's apprentice, Mr. Phillipps un-

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ceremoniously degrades the accomplished scholar of Mr. Wyndham, and the hunter, the falconer, and the horseman, of Mr. Justice Madden (i. 56). From his fourteenth to his eighteenth year, Mr. Phillipps confesses himself to be utterly unable to determine the nature of his occupations (i. 57). When he was little more than eighteen, we know from the records of the Consistory Court at Worcester that he was married, under the name of *Shagspere*, to a woman of twenty-six, who, as Mr. Wyndham shows, was in a hurry to present him with his first-born. In 1585 she presented him with twins. When he left Stratford for London we do not positively know. The twins were baptised on the 2nd of February, 1585, and Mr. Phillipps is of opinion that he left shortly after the baptism of the twins (i. 66); Mr. Lee represents him, not as riding on horseback, but as 'trudging on foot' to the metropolis in 1586 (p. 28); and Professor Dowden considers that his departure from his native place could not have been earlier than 1585, and might have been a year or two later (*H. I. Sh.* VIII., p. xix). Mr. Phillipps adduces evidence which shows that he was at Stratford in September 1587 (i. 80). At that time his father was in danger of arrest for debt (ii. 241); his own circumstances were desperate; and, accordingly, we may safely fix the end of 1587, or the beginning of 1588, as the date of his Hegira. The extremity of his distress is shown by the meanness of the employment which

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he was fain to accept when he arrived at London. Instead of representing him as riding straight to the *Theatre*, and claiming the privilege of a fellow-townsman from Burbage, Mr. Phillipps owns that there is not the faintest evidence that Burbage came from Stratford (ii. 344); and instead of representing him as enrolling himself forthwith in a company of players, Mr. Phillipps, seeing that 'the histrionic art is not learned in a day' (i. 68), came to the conclusion that, 'if connected in any sort of manner with the theatre immediately upon his arrival in London,' he 'could only have been engaged in a servile capacity' (i. 169).

Entertaining this view of his antecedents, Mr. Phillipps gives us *his* view of the intellectual qualifications of the young man when he arrived in London. 'Removed prematurely from school; residing with illiterate relations in a bookless neighbourhood; thrown into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress—it is difficult to believe, that when he first left Stratford he was not all but destitute of polished accomplishments' (i. 83); and his Biographer holds that 'he could not, at all events, under the circumstances in which he had then so long been placed, have had the opportunity of acquiring a refined style of composition' (p. 85). In fact, the only composition attributed to him during his early residence at Stratford is a ballad worthy of the bell-man, in which he is said to have lampooned the gentleman

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whose deer-park he had robbed, and from whose vengeance he is supposed to have fled to London.*

Nor can the picture of Mr. Phillipps be regarded as too highly coloured. Lord Macaulay, in describing the state of England in 1685, records that country gentlemen spoke the dialect of clowns, and that even the country clergy experienced the utmost difficulty in procuring books. The litter of a farmyard, he says, gathered under the windows of the bed-chamber of the lord of the manor, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall-door. Stratford was no exception to the general squalor; and Garrick, in 1769, on the occasion of the great Shakespeare celebration, described it as 'the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched-looking town in all Britain.'

Mr. Lee tells us that it is 'the apparent contrast between the homeliness of Shakespeare's Stratford career, and the breadth of observation and knowledge displayed in his literary work' which 'has evoked the fantastic theory that Shakespeare was not the author of the literature that passes under his name' (p. 307). But the contrast does not disappear by calling it apparent, and the theory is not refuted by styling it fantastic. The fantastic theory was maintained by Lord Palmerston; and John Bright was so impressed with the apparent contrast that, emulating the

* On Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Lucy, see Note A.



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controversial civilities in vogue, he declared that any man who believes that William Shakspere of Stratford wrote *Hamlet* or *Lear* is a fool. Even the Historian of the Literature of Europe was haunted by the shadow of the question when he wrote of Shakespeare. 'If we are not yet come to question his unity,' says Mr. Hallam, 'as we do that of the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle—an improvement in critical acuteness doubtless reserved for a distant posterity—we as little feel the power of identifying the young man who came up from Stratford, was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, and retired to his native place in middle life, with the author of *Macbeth* and *Lear*.'

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## *Of the Unity of Shakespeare.*

MR. LEE maintains that 'the abundance of the contemporary evidence attesting Shakespeare's'—that is the young Stratford man's—'responsibility for the works published under his name gives the Baconian Theory no rational right to a hearing' (p. 309). Let us then direct our attention to the first of the questions suggested by Mr. Hallam.

To the ordinary reader the *unity* of Shakespeare is as indisputable as his identity with the young man who came up from Stratford. The ordinary reader regards the Poet as the one bright particular star. To him the Shakespeare of the plays, like the Shakespeare of the poems, is indivisible and one. He has no more doubt of the unity of Shakespeare than he has of the unity of Milton. And he is fully justified in this belief. The only authoritative edition of the plays of the great dramatist declares that in the Folio they are



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presented to us 'cur'd and perfect of their limbs,' and 'absolute in their numbers as *he* conceived them.'

But the improvement in critical acuteness contemplated by Mr. Hallam has not been postponed to the distant posterity for which the eminent historian reserved it. To the Shakespearian Scholars of the day the Plays of Shakespeare, like the Iliads of Homer, are a noise of many waters. Mr. Swinburne tells us that no scholar believes in the single authorship of *Andronicus*, that no scholar questions the part taken by 'some hireling or journeyman' in *Timon*, and that 'few probably would refuse to admit a doubt of the total authenticity, or uniform workmanship, of *The Taming of the Shrew*' (p. 24). A host of experts, following in the footsteps of Malone, assert that the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry the Sixth* include the work of Marlowe. The writers in the Henry Irving Shakespeare ascribe the last act of *Troilus and Cressida* to Dekker (v. 249). Mr. Swinburne complains that the most characteristic portion of *Macbeth* has been attributed to Middleton (p. 19). Mr. Phillipps contends that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has been interpolated by a 'botcher' (ii. 265). Mr. Lee is as iconoclastic as the rest. Intolerant as he is of doubt as to the identity of Shakespeare, he, too, denies his unity. To him Shakespeare is a noun of multitude, signifying many. He attributes one

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of the most striking scenes in *Macbeth* to 'a hack of the theatre' (p. 196); he suggests that the third and fifth acts of *Timon* were the work of a 'colleague' with whom Shakespeare worked in collaboration (p. 197); he holds that the Vision of Posthumus in *Cymbeline* is a piece of 'pitiful mummery,' which must have been supplied by another hand (p. 203); and boldly carrying the judgment of Solomon into execution, he cuts the body of *Henry the Eighth* in two, and hands one half of it to Shakespeare, and the other half to Fletcher (p. 212).

As the work of Shakespeare is said to have been interpolated by others, so the work of others is said to have been appropriated by Shakespeare. The *Hamlet* mentioned by Nash in 1589 is attributed, by Mr. Lee to Kyd (p. 177); the *King John*, which was published in 1590, is regarded, by Mr. Marshall, as an old play by an unknown writer (*H. I. Sh.*, iii. 153); the *Henry the Sixth*, mentioned by Henslowe as performed in 1591, is described by Mr. Marshall as an old play which Shakespeare found at the theatre and slightly altered (i. 259); the *First Part of The Contention*, which was published in 1594, and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, which was published in 1595, Mr. Boas tells us, are considered by eminent critics as plays in the composition of which Shakespeare took no part (p. 540); and *The Taming of a Shrew*, which was published in 1594, is regarded,

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by Mr. Swinburne, as the work of an author 'as nameless as the deed of the Witches in *Macbeth*' (p. 124). And yet Mr. Lee admits that Shakespeare 'drew largely' on the *Hamlet* which he has attributed to Kyd (p. 182); Mr. Marshall acknowledges that Shakespeare was 'indebted for the materials' of his play to the *King John* of the unknown writer (iii. 153); the 'old play,' *Henry the Sixth*, appears in the Folio as the work of Shakespeare; Mr. Boas confesses that Shakespeare transferred some three thousand two hundred and fifty lines, with little or no alteration, from *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* to his Lancastrian Trilogy (p. 540); and Mr. Swinburne recognises the fact that, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, 'all the force and humour alike of character and situation belong to Shakespeare's eclipsed and forlorn precursor,' as he calls him, and that although Shakespeare 'tempered and enriched everything' in his precursor's play, in reality, he 'added nothing' (p. 124). In the same manner, according to Mr. Swinburne, he tempered and enriched everything in *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy*, 'confining his labour to slight and skilful strokes of art'—'to the correction of a false note, the addition of a finer touch, the perfection of a meaning half expressed, or a tone of half-uttered music; to the invigoration of sense and metre by substitution of the right word for the wrong, of a fuller phrase for one feebler; to the excision of such archaic and superfluous repetitions as are

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signs of a cruder state of workmanship, relics of a ruder period of style, survivals of the earliest form or habit of dramatic poetry' (p. 59). This is exactly the process by which an author, in the maturity of his genius, revises the productions of his youth; and this is the very thing that the Folio would lead us to believe. Accordingly, Mr. Phillipps holds that the theory of the authorship of Henslowe's *Henry the Sixth*, *The Contention*, and *The True Tragedy*, which best accords with the evidence we possess, is that which concedes the authorship of the three plays to Shakespeare (i. 87). The same conclusion may be drawn as to the authorship of *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Any other conclusion, in fact, would leave a stain on the memory of Shakespeare, and brand the editors of the Folio as guilty of a fraud.

It will be interesting to examine the causes which have induced Shakespearian Scholars to disregard the official declaration of the first and only authorised edition of the Shakespearian Plays. In the first place it is evident that Shakespeare, whoever he was, had in his novitiate been fascinated by the genius of Marlowe. 'The dead shepherd's saw of might' is cited from his *Hero and Leander*; Pistol's 'pampered jades of Asia' are taken from his *Tamburlaine*; and the 'despair and die' of the ghosts that haunted the tent of Richard is a reminiscence of the 'despair and

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die' of *Faustus*. At times he imitates the style of Marlowe so closely, that Mr. Swinburne, after quoting the passage commencing with 'The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day,' exclaims, *Aut Christophorus Marlowe aut diabolus* (p. 51). Not merely does Shakespeare imitate the style of Marlowe, but, at times, he reproduces his very words, so that Mr. Dyce conceived he had full warrant for supposing that *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* were, to a large extent, the work of Marlowe. But this, from first to last, was Shakespeare's way. The description of the horse in *Venus and Adonis*, which is regarded by Dr. Furnivall as a picture from Shakspere's youthful life at Stratford, is borrowed, point for point, and all but word for word, from Du Bartas;* the advice of Polonius to Laertes, according to Mr. Lee, is abstracted from the *Euphues* of Lyly (p. 56); the different forms of giving the lie discussed by Touchstone, are taken, Mr. Lee tells us, from the *Practise* of Saviolo, the fencing-master of the Earl of Essex (p. 166); the ideal commonwealth of Gonzalo is conveyed bodily from the *Essays* of Montaigne; and the character of Wolsey, which is put into the mouth of Griffith, is borrowed verbatim from Campion's *History of Ireland*. In fact, Shakespeare, like Molière, wherever he found anything that suited his purpose, or struck his

* See the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1894, referred to by Mr. Reed in his *Bacon* v. *Shakspere* (p. 239).

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fancy, appropriated it without scruple, and made it *his*.

A still more potent reason for the repudiation of the Folio is be found in the 'fallacy,' as Mr. Phillipps calls it, which is involved in the 'reverential belief' that everything that is truly Shakespeare's must be characterised by perfect judgment, and consummate taste (i. 100). Accordingly, it is argued that such and such a play is not up to the Shakespearian mark, that such and such a passage is below the Shakespearian level, and that such and such a 'damnable scene,' to use the words of Mr. Swinburne (p. 33), could not possibly have been the work of Shakespeare. And yet Mr. Swinburne admits that it is difficult to say to what depths of bad taste the writer of certain passages in *Venus and Adonis* could not fall before his genius or his judgment was full grown (p. 41). Fontenelle was of opinion that the first six or seven pieces of Corneille were scarcely worth preserving; and yet they were Corneille's. Professor Dowden thinks that *Titus Andronicus* is un-Shakespearian (p. 55); and yet the Folio assures us that it was the work of Shakespeare. Mr. Massey protests that *Andronicus* is the tragedy of horror, that it reeks blood, that it smells of blood, that we almost feel that we have handled blood—it is so gross. As if *Lear* was not a tragedy of horror; as if *Macbeth* did not reek blood; as if *Hamlet*, in its final scene, did not convert the stage into a

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slaughter-house, and leave it reeking like the shambles.

The 'metrical tests,' as they are called, supply another motive for the disregard of the Folio declaration. 'These are the *ignes fatui*,' says Mr. Phillipps, 'which, in recent years, have enticed many a deluded traveller out of the beaten path into strange quagmires' (ii. 347). Mr. Swinburne is more out-spoken and emphatic. 'Properly understood,' he says, 'this that they call the metrical test is, doubtless, as they say, the surest or the sole sure key to one side of the secret of Shakespeare; but they will never understand it properly who propose to secure it by the ingenious device of numbering the syllables, and tabulating the results of a computation which shall attest in exact sequence the quantity, order, and proportion of single and double endings, of rhyme and blank verse, of regular lines and irregular, to be traced in each play by the horny eye and the callous finger of a pedant' (p. 6). Of such a tabulation of results we have a remarkable example. Mr. Boas tells us that in *Henry the Eighth* 'the proportion of double endings is 1 to 3, of unstopt lines, 1 to 2·03, the percentage of light endings and weak endings together, 7·16, and the number of rhymed lines, 6' (p. 546). Mr. Boas is anything but a pedant, but it is on tapster's arithmetic such as this, that thirteen out of the seventeen scenes of *Henry the Eighth* are attributed by Mr. Lee to Fletcher

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(p. 212). Mr. Symons, writing in the Irving Shakespeare (viii. 160), as an 'unanswerable question,' asks, 'Did Shakespeare, at any period of his life, write verse in the metre of Wolsey's often-quoted soliloquy?'—

> Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
> This is the state of man—to-day he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
> And bears his blushing honours thick upon him,
> The third day comes a frost, etc.

The answer to this unanswerable question is easy. The metre of Shakespeare has the infinite variety of the Egyptian Queen. At one time it thunders as the mighty line of Marlowe, at another it resounds with the organ-peal of Milton, then again, we seem listening to the Pandean pipe of Keats, and, at times, we hear the monotone of Fletcher. And it may be added that Shakespeare wrote in the monotone of Fletcher before Fletcher had begun to write.*

* If anyone cares to verify this statement let him read the speeches of Fenton in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*—the one beginning with the words 'From time to time I have acquainted you,' and the other with the words 'The truth is, she and I, long since contracted.' Or take the speech of the English king in *Henry the Fifth* to the three traitors beginning with 'God quit you in his mercy!' and the speeches of the French king and the Dauphin of France in the fourth Scene of the second Act. As far as double endings are concerned Hamlet's Soliloquy on suicide commences in much the same metre as Wolsey's Farewell to his greatness.

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But the main reason for denying the unity of Shakespeare is the difficulty felt by Mr. Hallam—the difficulty of identifying him with the young man who came up from Stratford. Take, for instance, the case of *Hamlet*. In 1589, Nash, in an Address to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities prefixed to the *Menaphon* of Greene, refers to a writer, of whom he says: 'If you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say, Handfulls of tragical speeches.' In 1594, Henslowe, in his *Diary*, records that the Play containing these tragical speeches was acted by the servants of the Lord Chamberlain at Newington Butts. In 1596, Lodge, in his *Wit's Miserie*, speaks of 'the Ghost which cried so miserably at the Theator, like an oyster wife, Hamlet, Revenge!' In 1601, Jonson, in *The Poetaster*, exhibits Tucca as calling for the Ghost, and his two satellites as shouting out, Vindicta! In 1602, Dekker, in his *Satiro-mastix*, introduces Tucca as saying, 'My name is Hamlet, Revenge!' No play could have been better known. On the 26th of July, 1602, 'A Booke, called the Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke, as yt was latelie Acted by the Lo: Chamberleyn his servants,' was registered in the Warden's Court. And, finally, in 1603, 'the *Tragicall Historie* of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke,' was published as by 'William Shake-speare,' with a declaration that it was presented 'as it

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hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where.' Under these circumstances, everyone must have regarded the *Tragicall Historie* as the play containing the *Tragical Speeches*, which had been produced by Henslowe, and by Burbage, which had been performed by the Servants of the Lord Chamberlain, which had been alluded to by Nash, by Lodge, by Jonson, and by Dekker, and which was known to every playgoer in the city. The plays had the same name; they dealt with the same subject; they treated it in the same manner; they used the same language; they were acted by the same company; they were performed in the same places; and everything pointed to the conclusion that they were written by the same author, and that the author was 'William Shakespeare.'* To this conclusion, however, an

* In this connexion a slight but curious coincidence may be noted. In the Preface to the *Menaphon* the text stands 'if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole Hamlets.' The comma, I think, must have been misplaced, and the passage should read 'if you intreate him faire, in a frostie morning he will affoord you whole Hamlets,' or, as it is added, whole 'Handfulls of tragical speeches.' It is on a frosty morning that *Hamlet*, as we have it, opens. 'Francisco' is introduced with nothing to do, and nothing to say but ''Tis bitter cold and I am sad at heart'; Marcellus, speaking of the bird of dawning, leads us to infer that it was Christmas time; and the Ghost, in bidding the Prince adieu, exclaims 'I scent the morning air'—all pointing to the 'frostie morning' of the sarcastic Nash.

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objection has been urged. 'It is scarcely possible,' says Mr. Marshall in the Irving Shakespeare, 'to maintain that the play referred to as well known in 1589, could have been by Shakespeare'—that is, by the young man from Stratford—'who was then only in his twenty-fifth year' (viii. 5).

In discussing the question of the *unity* of Shakespeare, we are thus brought face to face with the question of his *identity* which we are forbidden to discuss. The question which we are forbidden to discuss involves, as we see, a question of *authorship*, as well as the question of the unity of the author. And it is not the question of the authorship of the *Hamlet* of 1589 alone that it involves. It involves the question of the authorship of the *Andronicus* of 1590, of the *King John* of 1591, and of the Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth*, which, in its original form, was completed before September, 1592. Nor is it merely the question of age, suggested by Mr. Marshall, that is to be considered. Congreve wrote *The Old Bachelor* when he was twenty-three, *The Double-Dealer* when he was twenty-four, and *Love for Love* when he was twenty-five. But Congreve was a Scholar of the House in the University of Dublin; he was a member of the Inner Temple; he lived in the best society of London; he was the most accomplished gentleman of his time; and he is universally acknowledged to have been a man of genius. It is impossible to avoid contrasting these advantages

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with the humble origin, the sordid surroundings, the defective education, the mean employments, the want of every opportunity of culture, which were the lot of the young man who came up from Stratford in 1588. The Plays of Congreve, conspicuous as they are for their wit and their knowledge of the world, are not distinguished for their learning. The Plays of Shakespeare, on the other hand, are the most scholarly productions of the age. Mr. Spedding, it is true, in the letter which has been published by Judge Holmes in his well-known work, *The Authorship of Shakespeare* (p. 614), holds that even 'if Shakespeare had no learning as a scholar, or man of science, neither do the works attributed to him show traces of trained scholarship, or scientific education.' This is a startling assertion, but one which, having regard to the high esteem in which Mr. Spedding is deservedly held, we should consider. The claims of Shakespeare, as a man of science, will be subsequently tested; and, in the meanwhile, let us consider his claims to be regarded as a scholar.

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## iii

### *Of the Scholarship of Shakespeare*

A VAST amount of unnecessary labour, as it seems to me, has been expended in order to prove the fact that Shakespeare was a scholar. We are told by Judge Holmes, in his *Authorship of Shakespeare*, that Rowe found traces of Sophocles in the Plays; Pope, of Dares Phrygius; Colman, of Ovid; Farmer, of Horace and Virgil; Malone, of Lucretius, Catullus, Seneca, and Statius; Stevens, of Plautus; and the like. More enterprising explorers on these voyages of discovery have professed to detect in the plays indebtedness to the *Æthiopics* of Heliodorus, to the *Argonautics* of Valerius Flaccus, to the *Ephesiaca* of Xenophon Ephesius, and to the *De Vitâ Suâ* of Gregory Nazianzen. But, as Gibbon remarks of the parallelisms between Gregory and Shakespeare, the voice of nature is the same in Cappadocia as in Britain. Dr. Johnson ridiculés those who see a translation of 'I præ sequar' in 'Go before, I'll

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follow'; and no less ridiculous would it be to regard the 'oculis animi' of Cicero as necessarily the original of the 'mind's eye' of Shakespeare. In *Hamlet* we meet with such phrases as 'O my prophetic soul' and 'a sea of troubles,' and they may remind scholars of the πρόμαντις θυμός of the *Andromache*, and the κακῶν πέλαγος of *The Persians*; but no sensible man would suppose that Shakespeare was indebted for these phrases to the Greeks. Those who follow the same road will see the same objects, and those who see the same objects will describe them in the same language. We may be sure that Shakespeare, whoever he was, did not borrow his conception of Lady Macbeth from the *Agamemnon*, and that he was not indebted for his conception of Hamlet to the *Electra*. As for the references to Heliodorus, Valerius Flaccus, Dares Phrygius, and Xenophon Ephesius, they will be apt to remind the cynic of the references to Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Lucanus Ocellus, with which Mr. Ephraim Jenkinson dumbfounded Dr. Primrose.

The scholarship of Shakespeare is obvious on the very surface of his writings—*gemuit sub pondere cymba*. The author of the Sonnets, as Mr. Wyndham tells us, was master of the technicalities of the law, was familiar with all the philosophy of his time, and was a student of the eternal processes of nature. The author of the Poems shows that he had studied the writings of the Roman Poet to whom he



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owed at once his inspiration and his theme. The author of the plays positively parades his learning. The characters in *King Henry the Sixth* dilate upon the fall of Phaethon, and Althea's brand, and the great Alcides, and the Minotaur, and the Olympiads, and 'the nine Sibyls of old Rome.' Talbot complains that the Pucelle, like Hannibal, 'drives back his troops by fear, and conquers as she lists'; and he boasts that, like Nero, he would play the lute while the towns of France were burning. The Countess of Auvergne resolves to make herself as famous by the death of Talbot, 'as Scythian Tomyris by Cyrus' death.' The Maid of Orleans compares herself to 'the proud insulting ship' that bore 'Cæsar and his fortune'; and the Dauphin protests that 'Helen, the mother of great Constantine,' was not worthier of worship than the Maid. The Dauphin compares the promises of the Maid to 'the Gardens of Adonis,' undertakes to erect a statelier pyramis to her memory than that of 'Rhodope of Memphis,' and prophesies that her ashes will be borne in triumph before the Kings and Queens of France, enshrined in an urn more precious than 'the Coffer of Darius.' These allusions, as every scholar knows, are traceable to Plato, to Herodotus, and to Plutarch; but, having regard to Shakespeare's interest in Natural History, we may safely conclude that he derived his knowledge of the Gardens of Adonis, and Rhodope of Memphis, from the

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*Natural History* of Pliny. The story of the Coffer of Darius, in which Alexander deposited the works of Homer, is to be found in the *Advancement*. In the Second Part of the Trilogy, Queen Margaret, when railing at the King, remembers her Virgil, talks of the brazen caves of Æolus, and compares the fascination of Suffolk to the witchery which Ascanius exerted over Dido. Suffolk, on the sea-shore, when threatened with death by the captain of the pinnace, bethinks him of the *De Officiis*, and plies the captain with Cicero's description of 'the strong Illyrian Pirate.' Lord Say, in peril of assassination, quotes the *Commentaries* of Cæsar, in order to mollify Jack Cade, and Dick the Butcher. The Dramatist is so saturated with the literature of Greece, that he makes the fierce Barons, who figured in the wars of York and Lancaster, the most admirable Grecians. The savage Clifford announces that he is ready to rip up the infants of the house of York 'into as many gobbets as wild Medea young Absyrtus did.' The angry York talks of the Spear of Achilles, and the madness of the Telamonian Ajax. Warwick, when contemplating a night-adventure, is full of Ulysses, and stout Diomed, and the Tents of Rhesus. Edward compares Margaret to Helen of Greece, and describes her husband as a second Menelaus. Gloster declares that he will

> Play the orator as well as Nestor,
> Deceive more slily than Ulysses could,
> And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.



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And the saintly King, when upbraiding Gloster with the murder of his only son, gives vent to his parental feelings thus:—

> I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
> Thy father, Minos that denied our course;
> The sun that sear'd the wings of my sweet boy,
> Thy brother Edward; and thyself, the sea
> Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.

These elaborate conceits are not the voice of nature; these pedantries are not the native wood-notes wild of a rustic poet. But Shakespeare revelled in them to the last. In *The Taming of the Shrew* the lord talks to the tinker about Cytherea and Adonis, and Daphne and Apollo, and Semiramis, and Io. In *The Merchant of Venice* the Prince of Morocco speaks of Hercules and Lichas; Bassanio, in contemplating the 'sunny locks' of Portia, is reminded of 'the golden fleece' and 'Colchos' strand'; and Portia, as Bassanio approaches the caskets, says:—

> Now he goes,
> With no less presence, but with much more love,
> Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
> The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy:

—an allusion so far-fetched, that we must have recourse to some History of Greece to ascertain its significance and source.* As Shakespeare, in his

*If the reader wishes to gratify his curiosity on this point, he may consult Grote's *History of Greece* (i. 239), where he will also find an explanation of the fact that in *Troilus and Cressida* the Telamonian Ajax is described as 'cousin-german to great Priam's seed' (i. 157).

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*Henry the Sixth*, describes the Dauphin as speaking of the Coffer of Darius, so in his *Richard the Second* he makes Bolingbroke defy Mowbray in the words of Anaxarchus, and represents the Gardener at Langley as acting upon the advice of Periander. Lucio, in *Measure for Measure*, talks of 'the Images of Pygmalion' as familiarly as if he, too, were fresh from reading the *Advancement*. Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice*, exclaims:—

> Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion,
> And would not be awaked!

and even Launcelot Gobbo talks of Scylla and Charybdis. And, finally, the Queen of Curds and Cream, brought up as she was in a Bohemian Grange, exclaims,

> O, Proserpina,
> For the flowers that frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon!

Nor is this the limit of the Scholarship of Shakespeare. Ancient Philosophy is paraded with as much ostentation as Ancient Literature. Gratiano in *The Merchant*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and the Clown in *Twelfth Night*, refer to the opinions of Pythagoras; the Dauphin in *Henry the Sixth* draws his metaphors from Plato; and Hector in *Troilus and Cressida* cites Aristotle for the edification of Troilus and Paris. Something more remarkable still is to be noted. As Bacon

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presses the whole mythology of Greece into the service of philosophy, so Shakespeare presses it into the service of the drama. The Typhon's Brood, the Hammer of the Cyclops, the Transformations of Proteus, the Fall of Phaethon, the Rape of Proserpine, the Theft of Prometheus, the Maze of Daedalus, the Wings of Icarus, the Heels of Atalanta, the Warnings of Cassandra, the Frenzy of Pygmalion—all these are as familiar to the author of the Plays as they were to the author of *The Wisdom of the Ancients*.

In the face of this ostentatious display of erudition, Mr. Spedding maintains that the works which are attributed to the young man who came up from Stratford show no traces of trained scholarship, or scientific education. It is an amazing statement, and one which must have silenced the eminent Baconian to whom it was addressed, with the stupor of amazement. But Mr. Spedding only leaves the difficulty where he found it. Call it trained scholarship or not, we cannot fail to recognise the knowledge of Ancient History, Philosophy, and Literature, of the History of England, of Law, of Medicine, of the Art of Composition, and of the Tragic Art, which is displayed in *Henry the Sixth*. Giving the Stratford Grammar School all the credit that we can be reasonably called upon to give, we cannot suppose this vast amount of information to have been acquired at Stratford. It was a bookless

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neighbourhood, and if we may trust tradition, the habits of the young Stratford man were anything but scholastic. Mr. Phillipps, as we have seen, was compelled to admit that when he left Stratford for London he was all but destitute of polished accomplishments; Mr. Lee confesses that he had no claim to rank as a classical scholar; and Mr. Hallam, *instar omnium*, was so staggered by the circumstances of the case, that, though he accepted the popular belief, he declared himself powerless to identify the young man who came up from Stratford with the author of *Macbeth* and *Lear*.

The Trilogy of *King Henry the Sixth*, which was completed some time in 1592, must have been commenced in 1590, when Shakspere had but recently come up from Stratford. But when *Macbeth* and *Lear* were written, Shakspere had been twenty years in London, and during that time he might have remedied the defects of his early education. He might have acquired a knowledge of the Classics. Like Master Clive, in *Every Man out of his Humour*, he might have spent his afternoons in a bookseller's shop poring over books in French, Italian, and Spanish. He might have dined at the Ordinary, described in *The Gull's Hornbook*, and picked up a smattering of law from the thrifty attorneys, whose legal jargon is ridiculed by Dekker. He might have shared in the lyric feasts at the Sun, the Dog, and the Triple Tun, described by Herrick; and he might have been

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admitted to the chamber in the Old Devil, which was the Tavern Academy of Ben. He might even have been a member of the Mermaid, and absorbed the full Mermaid Wine of wit and wisdom, the mere memory of which inspired the muse of Beaumont. But the world is not made up of might-have-beens, and we cannot accept possibilities as facts, and we have not a particle of evidence to justify these assumptions. Still if we choose to indulge our fancy, and to endow the Player with that enormous receptivity with which he is endowed by Professor Dowden—if with the Professor we choose to compare him to the Arctic Whale, which gulps in whole shoals of acalephæ and molluscs, we may account for that vast and various amount of information which strikes us with amazement in the later works of Shakespeare (p. 44).

But these assumptions, gratuitous as they are, afford no solution of the problem to be solved. In the interval between the end of 1587, when the young countryman disappeared from Stratford, and the end of 1592, when he reappeared in London, some half-dozen Shakespearian Dramas had been written. According to that eminent Shakespearian expert, Dr. Furnivall, *Love's Labour's Lost* was composed in 1588–1589; *The Comedy of Errors* in 1589–1591; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1590–1591; and *Romeo and Juliet* in 1591–1593. *Hamlet* was well known in 1589; *Titus Andronicus*

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must have been written before 1590; *King John* was printed in 1591; the Three Plays that composed the Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth* must have been studied, completed, and performed before 1592; and *The Taming of the Shrew*, which was published in 1594, and had been 'sundry times acted,' must have been written before Shakspere, who, like a wild mallard, had plunged into the pond, had finally emerged to view.

Accordingly, Mr. Phillipps holds that the interval between 1587 and 1592 must have been the chief period of Shakespeare's literary education (i. 83). And, undoubtedly, if we assume that the young man from Stratford was the author of these early plays, it must. But, unfortunately, the inference is only necessitated by the assumption, and the assumption has but little to support it. Mr. Phillipps candidly tells us that there is not a single particle of evidence respecting his career during the five years in question (i. 83); and if, in the absence of positive evidence, we accept the traditions which are regarded by the Biographers as authentic, we shall see but little reason to regard the interval between 1587 and 1592 as a period of literary education. According to a tradition traced to Davenant, who was his god-son and was anxious to be regarded as his son, his first employment in London was that of a horseboy; and according to the tradition which has descended to us from a Parish Clerk of his

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native place, his first connexion with the theatre was in the capacity of a servitor or servant. It is not likely that he rose from a horseboy to a servitor at a bound; and it is certain that he could not have been raised from a servitor to an actor by a stroke of magic. The histrionic art, as Mr. Phillipps observes, is not learnt in a day, but requires a severe preliminary training (i. 68); and the facts agree with this conclusion. It is not till September 1592, that we hear of him as an actor; as late as May 1593, his name is not included in the official list of players (ii. 329); and the first record of his acting which we possess is that which informs us that in Christmas 1594 he had attained sufficient excellence in his profession to play before the Queen (i. 107).

Circumstances more unfavourable to literary education than those in which the young man found himself from 1587 to 1592, can scarcely be imagined; but let us try to realise the amount of education which we must conceive him to have acquired before we can consider him to have been the author of the Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth*. The author, as we have seen, was familiar with the History, the Literature, the Philosophy, and the Mythology of the Ancients. From his accurate use of legal phraseology, that eminent Shakespearian, Mr. Marshall, acknowledges that he would certainly seem, at one period of his life, to have had some practical acquaintance with the

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technicalities of the law (*H. I. Sh.* i. 346). From the conversation in the Temple Gardens, Mr. Castle infers that he was well acquainted with the habits and life of the members of the Temple (p. 65). And certainly no lawyer can read the three plays without seeing that the dramatist was a perfect master of all the legal and constitutional questions which were involved in the contest of the Houses. In other directions the acquirements of the author are apparent. The famous passage in which Warwick enumerates the signs which proved that the good Duke Humphrey was not 'a timely parted ghost,' but was 'a strangled man,' could only have been written by one who, like Bacon, had been 'puddering in physic'; and never did Shakespeare, even in the final omnipotence of his genius, display a more astonishing command of the tragic elements of pity and terror, than is displayed in the death agony of the guilty Cardinal, who died, and made no sign. Here, then, is the riddle which we have to solve. If we are to regard the young man from Stratford as the author of *Henry the Sixth*, we have to explain how an uneducated, or half-educated young countryman, from a bookless neighbourhood, during a severe struggle for existence, and without any apparent opportunities for study, could have acquired the knowledge of History, of Law, of Medicine, of the ancient Classics, of the Art of Composition, and of the Tragic Art, which is conspicuous in the noble Trilogy, from which

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Chatham derived his knowledge of the History of England.

The difficulty of recognising the young man from Stratford as the author of *Henry the Sixth* is not diminished when we consider the *Love's Labour's Lost* of 1588–9. Ignoring the imperfect education, the sordid surroundings, the mean employments, and the wild adventures of the young man, Mr. Coleridge is of opinion that the diction and allusions of the play afford a strong presumption that 'his habits had been scholastic' (p. 287). The principal characters of the play, according to Mr. Marshall, were persons who had figured prominently in the recent politics of France (*H. I. Sh.* i. 3). The subject-matter of the play, according to Mr. Lee, suggests that its author had already enjoyed extended opportunities of surveying London life and manners (p. 48); that he was well acquainted with the fashions of speech and dress current in fashionable circles (p. 49); and that he was familiar with all the gossip of the court (*ibid.*). The justice of these remarks, as applied to the author of *Love's Labour's Lost*, is not to be denied. The habits of the author could not have been more scholastic if, like Bacon, he had spent three years in the University of Cambridge; he could not have been more familiar with French politics if, like Bacon, he had spent three years in the train of an Ambassador to France; he could not have been more thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of fashionable

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life in London if, like Bacon, he had been the friend of Essex and Southampton; and he could not have been more familiar with all the gossip of the Court if, like Bacon, he had, from his earliest youth, been dancing attendance on the Virgin Queen. It may be added that he could not have shown a greater knowledge of Spanish and Italian proverbs if, like Bacon, he had formed a collection of them, and entered them in a common-place book such as *Promus*. Like Bacon, too, the author of the play must have had a large command of books. He must have had his 'Horace,' his 'Ovidius Naso,' and his 'good old Mantuan.' He must have had access to the *Chronicles* of Monstrelet to know the conflicting claims of France and Navarre to Aquitaine. The style of narration, according to Mr. Coleridge, who thinks that the play was planned before Shakspere had left Stratford (p. 249), seems imitated from the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney (p. 287).* Sir Piercie Shafton could not have been better read in the *Euphues* of Lyly. The treatment of Don Armado and his boy, Moth, reminds Mr. Lee of Sir Thopas and his boy, Epiton, in Lyly's *Endymion* (p. 56). It is not too much to say that the author of *Love's Labour's Lost* was the embodiment of all the accomplishments

* Sidney died in 1586, and the *Arcadia* was not published till 1590; and though it is said to have been circulated in manuscript, the manuscript could scarcely have come under the notice of Shakspere before he arrived in London.

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and all the culture of his age. In the purity and plenitude of his English he was unrivalled; in 'the elegance, facility, and golden cadence' of his verse, he was unsurpassed; he eclipsed Lyly; he outshone Sidney; his blank verse, in the opinion of Mr. Coleridge, has nothing equal to it but that of Milton (p. 181); and Mr. Swinburne recognises in it 'the speech of gods' (p. 48).

How the young countryman could have acquired the speech of gods, when even country gentlemen, according to Macaulay, spoke the dialect of clowns —how he could have acquired the book-learning which is conspicuous in the play, when even the country clergy, according to Macaulay, found the utmost difficulty in procuring books—how he could have become acquainted with the fashions of speech and dress current in the fashionable circles of London while residing in a country town such as that described by Garrick—these are questions to which everyone would like to receive an answer, but they are questions which are left unanswered, nay, unasked, by Mr. Lee.

When we come to consider the *Comedy of Errors*, we meet with difficulties not less formidable than those which we are doomed to encounter in considering *Love's Labour 's Lost*. According to Dr. Furnivall, the comedy was written in 1589–1591; and, according to Mr. Marshall, 'we may safely conclude that it was completed between 1589 and 1592' (*H. I. Sh.* i. 76). It was founded

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on the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, which was not translated into English till 1595 (*ibid.* 75). The author, therefore, must have been a scholar. The author, moreover, to quote the words of Mr. Swinburne, 'embroidered on the naked old canvas of comic action those flowers of elegiac beauty which vivify and diversify the scene of Plautus' (p. 45). The author, therefore, must have been a master of the arts of composition. The jests of the Comedy, according to Lord Campbell, show that the author was familiar with some of the most abstruse proceedings of English Jurisprudence. The author, therefore, must have been a lawyer. How, then, it will be asked, is it possible to identify this brilliant combination of the lawyer, the scholar, and the accomplished writer, with the young country fellow who, in 1588, was all but destitute of polished accomplishments, and utterly unversed in the arts of composition? The play was performed in the Hall of Grays Inn at the Christmas Revels of 1594, and the history of the function is given in the *Gesta Grayorum*. From the similarity of style, and from the fact that the names of the eminent persons who assisted at the function are given, while that of Bacon is not mentioned, it has been argued, with much plausibility, that Bacon was the author of the pamphlet. Be that as it may, the *Gesta* records the fact that the Comedy was performed on the occasion, and that, contrary to

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the general custom of the Inns of Court, it was acted by the Players. This could not have been done without the knowledge and consent of Bacon, who was a Bencher of the Inn, if not the actual Master of the Revels; and Mr. Castle (p. 226) very plausibly suggests that Bacon, as the namesake of the famous Friar, was 'the conjuror' who, according to the *Gesta*, was put upon his trial for 'foisting a company of base and common fellows' on a society of lawyers. Of this company of base and common fellows, Shakspere undoubtedly was one. What, then, was his position? In Christmas, 1594, he had been six or seven years in London. During that period *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, had been produced, as well as *The Comedy of Errors*. These masterpieces would have made their author famous, unless he was one who preferred to be regarded as the Great Unknown. The Player had no motive for concealment; on the contrary, if he was the author, he had every motive to come forward and to claim his laurels. And yet he had never claimed them; he had never been recognised as the author of the plays; and when the whole rank and intellect of London was assembled to witness the performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, he was not hailed by the audience as the famous dramatist, but was regarded as one of the company of base and common

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fellows whom the conjuror had foisted on the Inn.*

Mr. Coleridge has endowed the young man who came up from Stratford with a 'superhuman genius'; and undoubtedly, if we assume the young man to have been the author of the plays, we must grant him the possession of a genius which, making allowance for poetic licence, we may describe as superhuman. But, unfortunately, in the absence of evidence that the young man possessed a superhuman genius, we have no right, in the absence of evidence, to assume that he was the author of the plays; and, most assuredly, he had given no signs of the possession of a superhuman genius while he remained at Stratford. Enthusiasts more *ultra-fidian* than Mr. Coleridge, have carried the theory of superhuman genius into a theory of actual inspiration. Admitting his humble origin, his

* Mr. Lee considers it to be doubtful whether Shakspere was present at the performance, on the ground that he was acting on the same day before the Queen at Greenwich (p. 62). But Mr. Lee's doubt is grounded on a misconception. It is true that documents in the Lord Chamberlain's office record the fact that Burbage, Kempe, and Shakspere acted in 'two several comedies, or interludes,' before the Queen, on the 26th and 28th of December, 1594; but we know from the *Gesta* that, though the Revels commenced on Innocents' Day, the 28th, the play was not performed till the second evening of the function, that is on the 29th. If Shakspere was absent from the performance, then, on Mr. Lee's reasoning, Kempe and Burbage must have been absent also; and if so, how could the comedy have been acted by the Players?



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defective education, his mean employments, and his want of all opportunities of culture, they have venerated him as a miraculous birth of time, to whom the whole world of being was revealed by a sort of Apocalyptic vision, and who was endowed with the gift of tongues by a species of Pentecostal fire. This is Shaksperiolatry run mad. When we venerate Shakespeare, we venerate him not as a miracle, but as a man; and the ordinary laws of nature are not suspended in the case of extraordinary men. It is here that the difficulty of the Shaksperian lies. Though poetry, as Bacon says, is a plant that cometh of the lust of the earth, the intuitions of genius cannot supply a knowledge of material facts. Book-learning cannot be acquired without books, and books cannot be obtained in a neighbourhood that is bookless. The Arctic Whale may be capable of gulping in whole shoals of acalephæ and molluscs, but its enormous receptivity is naught if it has no acalephæ and molluscs to gulp.

Notwithstanding the contrast between the homeliness of the Stratford career of the young Player, and the breadth of observation and knowledge displayed in the works of which he is reputed to have been the author, Mr. Lee is of opinion that 'the abundance of the contemporary evidence,' attesting his responsibility for the works published under the name of Shakespeare, 'gives the Baconian Theory no rational right to a hearing' (p. 309).

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And, undoubtedly, if the Player's responsibility for the works published under the name of Shakespeare is duly attested, all controversy is concluded. In the presence of established fact antecedent improbabilities vanish, apparent impossibilities disappear, discussion is closed, and doubt itself is dumb. Let us see, then, what is the contemporary evidence which attests the responsibility of the young man who came up from Stratford for the works which were published under the name of Shakespeare.



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## IV

### *Of the Identity of Shakespeare*

WHEN the young man from Stratford arrived in London there were only two Playhouses in the city—the *Theatre*, built in 1576 by James Burbage, the father of the famous tragic actor, and the *Curtain*, built about the same time by Philip Henslowe, the father-in-law of Alleyn. The *Rose* was built by Henslowe in 1592, and the *Globe* by the sons of Burbage in 1599. The *Blackfriars* was a subsequent erection. The site was demised to James Burbage in 1596, and was subdemised by him as a theatre for the Children of the Chapel, the little eyases of *Hamlet*, by whom it was occupied till 1609, when the sons of Burbage converted it into a theatre for men. The early Shakespearian plays had no peculiar home. *Hamlet* was performed at the *Theatre*, and *Love's Labour 's Lost* at the *Curtain*, but the later plays were all performed at the *Blackfriars* or the *Globe*. Mr. Phillipps and Mr. Lee are of opinion that the earliest successes of Shakspere were achieved

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at Henslowe's theatre, the *Rose*; but Henslowe, who kept a diary, in which he recorded his dealings with all the leading playwrights of the day, never once makes mention of his name. All our evidence, on the contrary, points to his early connexion with the Burbages. The elder Burbage kept a livery stable in the neighbourhood of the *Theatre*, and this, as Mr. Phillipps thinks, may explain the tradition of Shakspere's employment as a horseboy (i. 72). In was in company with Richard Burbage that he is first introduced to our notice as an actor (i. 109); and it is as a member of the Burbage troupe that he is known to us during the whole of his subsequent career. If there was anyone, therefore, who could have attested the responsibility of the young Stratford man for the Plays which were published under the name of Shakespeare, it was the Burbages. They were the owners of the theatres at which they were performed; they were the managers to whom the manuscripts must have been submitted; they were in daily intercourse with Shakspere; and yet, as Mr. Phillipps admits, the Burbages had no conception of the intellectual supremacy of their friend and fellow (i. 102). Of this we have a remarkable proof in the papers of which Mr. Phillipps has given us a transcript (i. 286). In 1635, Richard Burbage was dead, and his brother, Cuthbert, was involved in a dispute between the 'Actors' and the 'Housekeepers' of the *Blackfriars* and the

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*Globe*. The Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the survivor of the Incomparable Pair of Brethren to whom the Folio was dedicated, was the Lord Chamberlain of the day, and to him, as the autocrat of the stage, the matter was referred. In a memorial addressed to that nobleman, Cuthbert Burbage gives an account of the building of the *Globe* by his deceased brother and himself, and he relates the circumstances under which Shakspere became connected with the great Shakespearian Playhouse. 'To ourselves,' he says, 'we joined those deserving men, Shakspere, Hemings, Condall, Philips, and others, partners in the profits of that they call the House' (i. 291); and he adds that when he and his brother took possession of the *Blackfriars* in 1609, they placed in it 'men-players which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspeare, &c.,' as successors to the Children of the Chapel. This is all we know of the circumstances under which Shakspere became connected with the *Blackfriars* and the *Globe*; and it cannot but appear strange that the proprietor of the Playhouses, which had been made famous by the production of the Shakespearian Plays, should, in 1635—twelve years after the publication of the Great Folio—describe their reputed author to the survivor of the Incomparable Pair, as merely a 'man-player,' and a 'deserving man.' But so the record stands.

As to the earlier career of the young Stratford

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man in London we are completely in the dark. Mr. Phillipps tells us that there is not a single particle of evidence respecting his career in the interval between the years 1587 and 1592 (i. 83). The writer to whom we are indebted for the first glimpse of the young adventurer after he arrived in London is Robert Greene. Born in 1560, Greene was three or four years senior to Shakspere. He was a man of genius. He was a graduate of both Universities. He was at once the most versatile and the most laborious of literary men. In his brief career he was the author of some forty pamphlets; he was one of the founders of English fiction; and he was the author of half a-dozen plays, which enjoyed great popularity in their day, and which, after the lapse of three centuries, have been deemed worthy of republication. Unfortunately Greene was one of those men of genius who are so vividly described in *The Fortunes of Nigel*—men who alternately revelled in debauchery, and struggled with the meanest necessities of life. He was, in fact, the victim of that fatal banquet of Rhenish Wine and Pickled Herrings, which is so frequently alluded to in the literature of the time. It is to him, in all probability, that Shakespeare alludes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as 'Learning late deceased in beggary'; and it is certain that Shakespeare selected one of his novels as the groundwork of *The Winter's Tale*. In September, 1592, Greene

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was lying on his death-bed, and, in an access of remorse, he addressed his famous pamphlet, *The Groatsworth of Wit*, to Marlowe, Peele, and Lodge, 'his quondam acquaintances, that spent their wits in making plays.' The plays of Greene and his three friends would seem to have been performed by the company of which Shakspere had recently become a member. At the time the dramatic poet, as one of the hired men of the theatre, was paid by the actors out of their share in the takings of the house; and Shakspere, whether as the junior of the troupe, or as already remarkable for the business aptitudes which distinguished him through life, would seem to have been entrusted with its pecuniary affairs. Greene, conceiving that he had been neglected in his extremity by the young Johannes Factotum, as he calls him, denounced him as a man with 'a tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide,' and advised his friends to seek them better masters than 'such rude grooms,' such 'buckram gentlemen,' 'such peasants.' The young Factotum, it seems, claimed to be the only Shake-scene in a country, and boasted that he could bombast out a blank verse with the best: but Greene informs his friends, who do not seem to have been previously aware of Shakspere's existence, that he was only one of 'those puppits that speak from our mouths,' one of 'those antics garnisht in our colours,' 'an upstart crow beautified with our feathers,' one of 'those

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painted monsters,' in fine, whom Greene consigned to the contempt of 'the best-minded' of his contemporaries. In this tirade of the playwright against the players one thing, at all events, is clear. The author of *The Groatsworth of Wit* does not identify the young Shake-scene with the Shakespeare who, in 1592, had written *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and it is worthy of remark that while the Shakspere of the stage, according to Greene, was boasting that he could bombast out blank verse with the best, the Shakespeare of the plays, according to Mr. Swinburne, was still under the influence of 'his evil angel, rhyme' (p. 32).

From the language of *The Groatsworth*, Mr. Dyce inferred that 'before September, 1592, Shakespeare had remodelled certain pieces written, either separately or conjointly, by Greene, Marlowe, Peele, and Lodge'; and Mr. Lee thinks that Greene's tirade was inspired by his resentment at the energy of the young actor in revising the work of his seniors with such masterly effect, as to imperil their hold upon the public (p. 53). But the language of Greene does not warrant the conclusion; and, as Mr. Phillipps justly observes, it merely conveys that Shakspere was one who acted in the plays of which Greene and his three friends were the authors (ii. 269). It is not pretended that the young actor touched up any of the

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acknowledged works of his predecessors. It is not pretended, for instance, that he touched up the *Tamburlaine* of Marlowe, or the *David and Bethsebe* of Peele, or the *Tu Quoque* of Greene, or *The Looking-Glass of London*, to which Greene refers as the joint production of himself and Lodge. Nor, indeed, is there any pretence for contending that he touched up the work of any of his seniors. Henslowe, who was the proprietor of the *Curtain* and the *Rose*, undoubtedly employed writers to touch up the plays which he had purchased; but he makes no mention of the name of Shakspere. The Burbages, who were the proprietors of the *Theatre* and the *Globe*, are so far from recognising him as a toucher-up, that they merely rank him, with Hemming and Condell, as one of their men-players and deserving men. That a great original genius who, in 1588 or 1589, had produced *Love's Labour 's Lost*, should have condescended to touch up the works of elder and lesser men, is not to be admitted without at least *some* evidence of the fact; and Mr. Phillipps, whose researches nothing can have escaped, has the candour to confess that 'no record has been discovered of even one drama so treated by Shakespeare in the early period of his career' (i. 113).

Mr. Swinburne, however, adheres to the popular opinion. 'That Shakespeare began by retouching and recasting the work of elder and lesser men,' he says, 'we all know' (p. 22). But when we come to

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examine the grounds of this universal knowledge, we are thrown back on the long-vexed question of the authorship of *The First Part of the Contention*, and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*. To determine this question, it should be sufficient to remark that Shakespeare transferred some three thousand two hundred and fifty lines, with little or no alteration, from the two plays to his Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth*, and that if we are to recognise any such thing as literary honesty in Shakespeare, we must recognise him as their author. That he touched them up is certain, and the only question is whether, in touching them up, he was touching up his own work or that of others. The Folio gives the whole Trilogy as the exclusive work of Shakespeare, and, accordingly, Mr. Phillipps, as we have seen, regards *The Contention*, and *The True Tragedy*, as early works of the great dramatist. Mr. Swinburne takes a different view. 'Two points,' he says, 'must of course be taken for granted, that Marlowe was more or less concerned in the production, and Shakespeare'—that is, the young man from Stratford—'in the revision of these plays' (p. 51). Let us, for a moment, consider the two points which we are required to take for granted. Fortunately Mr. Dyce in his *Life* has done for Marlowe what Mr. Phillipps in his *Outlines* has done for Shakspere, and has furnished a collection of all the known facts respecting the personal and literary history of that bright

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morning star of the English Drama; so that, at every step of their respective careers, we can compare the circumstances and qualifications of the two. Marlowe was baptised at Canterbury on the 26th of February 1564, and Shakspere was baptised at Stratford on the 26th of the following April, so that Marlowe, even if a lesser, can scarcely be regarded as an elder man. In 1574, when Shakspere is assumed to have been attending the Grammar School of Stratford, we know, from the treasurer's accounts, that Marlowe was a King's Scholar in the Grammar School of the great Cathedral city. On the 17th of March, 1580, when Shakspere, according to his Biographers, was a butcher's apprentice, Marlowe, according to the College records, was matriculated as a pensioner at Cambridge. In 1583, when Shakspere had recently contracted his irregular and improvident marriage, Marlowe had taken his university degree. In 1587, when Shakspere, according to his Biographer, was utterly unversed in the arts of composition, Marlowe had revolutionised the English stage by the production of his *Tamburlaine*. In 1589, when Shakspere was a mere horseboy, Marlowe had written *Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*. In 1590, when Shakspere was a mere servitor, Marlowe had written *Edward the Second*, which, in the opinion of Mr. Swinburne, was superior to the *Richard the Second* of his great successor (p. 39). In September 1592,

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when Shakspere was denounced by Greene as an 'upstart crow,' Marlowe was recognised by Greene as 'the famous gracer of tragedians.' On the 1st of June 1593, the brilliant but meteoric genius perished before his time, the first and greatest of 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown.' His contemporaries vied with one another in proclaiming his excellent wit, his immortal beauty, his unspherèd flame, his raptures, his fine madness, and the thunder of his mighty line. Such was the man whose resounding verse, we must take for granted, was touched up, and whose glowing text, we must take for granted, was recast, by the uneducated or half-educated young countryman from Stratford. According to Mr. Swinburne, 'the most unmistakable signs of Marlowe's handiwork' in *The Contention* 'belong to the play only in its revised form' (p. 55). We may test the whole theory by this. *The Contention*, as we have seen, must have been written before September 1592; it was registered on the 12th of March 1593; Marlowe was killed on the 1st of the following June; the play was first published in 1594; and the play, in its revised form, did not appear till the end of 1623, more than thirty years after Marlowe's death.

Greene died on the 3rd of September 1592, and *The Groatsworth* was published in the following December by Henry Chettle. Printer, Publisher, Pamphleteer, Playwright, and Parcel-poet, Chettle

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was a noticeable man among the people of his day. He was one of Henslowe's hacks; and the manager records, in his famous *Diary*, how he had commissioned 'Mr. Dickers and harey Cheattell'—such was the good man's spelling—to write a play on 'Troyeles and creasseday.' In his *England's Mourning Garment*, Chettle pours forth his lament over the death of Elizabeth, and expresses his surprise that 'the silver-tongued Mellicert'—as he styles Shakespeare—did not 'drop from his honied muse one sable tear to mourn her death.' In his *Kind Hartes Dream*, which was registered on the 8th of December 1592, and which, as it appeared after *The Groatsworth*, must have been published early in 1593, Chettle gives us a second and more flattering portrait of the young actor. Greene, he says, in his *Groatsworth*, left 'a letter written to divers play-makers,' which was 'offensively by one or two of them taken.' The only persons who could possibly have taken offence were Marlowe, who was charged with 'diabolical atheism,' and the young Shake-scene, who, though not one of the play-makers to whom the letter was addressed, was denounced as a man with a 'tiger's heart,' and derided as 'an upstart crow.' 'With neither of them that take offence,' Chettle says, 'was I acquainted'; and he proceeds to apologise to Shakspere, 'because,' he says, 'myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides divers of worship

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have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.' *

Who these 'divers of worship' were, what 'dealing' they had with the young player, and what motive they had in spreading a 'report' of his facetious grace in writing, we are left to guess. According to Mr. Phillipps, they belonged to 'the higher classes of society,' for so he understands the words of Chettle (ii. 343). Why persons of position should have interested themselves in spreading a report of the Player's facetious grace in writing, is anything but clear. In December 1592 nothing had been published in his name, or under any name similar to his. No Poem was published under the name of Shakespeare till 1593; no Play till 1598; no edition of the Sonnets till 1609. But it may be remarked, as at least a coincidence, that the report of Shakspere's facetious grace in writing was spread by persons of position at the end of 1592, and that *Venus and Adonis* was registered with the Stationers on the 13th of April 1593, and was shortly afterwards dedicated to Southampton as by 'William Shakespeare.'

This was the first mention of the immortal

* Mr. Hallam describes Shakspere as 'an indifferent actor.' But Chettle speaks of him as 'excellent in the quality he professed'; and, if he had been an indifferent player, he would scarcely have been selected to play before the Queen, with Kempe and Burbage, in 1594.

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name. Was it a pseudonym, or was it the real name of the author of the poem? The author himself suggests the question. In the *Sonnets*, which were written about the same time as the poem, he asks (*S.* 76)—

> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep Invention in a noted weed,
> Till every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth, and where they do proceed?

Here the author certainly intimates that Shakespeare was not his real name, and that he was fearful lest his real name should be discovered. If the author was a man of position, who was anxious to remain concealed, it was absolutely necessary for him to assume some definite *nom-de-plume* in order to allay curiosity and to avert suspicion. In such a case no more felicitous pseudonym could have been selected than that of *Shakespeare*. The name was not peculiar to Stratford. It was not peculiar to Warwickshire. As Mr. Phillipps shows, it was a name which was to be found in nearly every part of England (ii. 252). Though the name resembled that of Burbage's deserving man, it was neither spelt nor pronounced in the same manner, and if people were misled by the similarity, that was no concern of the author's. The public had no right to the possession of his secret, and the player had no reason to complain if he was thought to be the writer of the most

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successful dramas of the day. Scott, the most chivalrous of gentlemen, elected to remain the Great Unknown, though the maintenance of his incognito caused his brother to be regarded as the Author of Waverley. Whatever was the real name of the author of the plays, he is only known by the 'noted weed' in which he kept Invention. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin preferred to be known as Molière; François-Marie Arouet became one of the immortals as Voltaire; and a greater than either of the illustrious Frenchmen will to all time be only known as Shakespeare.

*Venus and Adonis* was dedicated to Southampton. It was to Southampton, as Mr. Lee has shown, that the Sonnets were addressed; and Southampton, according to Mr. Lee, is the only patron of the player that is known to biographical research (p. 102). If, then, there were any persons of position who were interested in spreading a report of the player's facetious grace in writing, it is natural to conclude that they were Southampton and his friends; and we cannot overlook the fact that Southampton and his friends were the friends of Bacon. Southampton, as we know, from the *Sidney Papers*, was a lover of the stage, and it may well be that, like Chettle, he was struck by the civil demeanour of the young Shake-scene, and by his excellence in the quality which he professed. There is a tradition, which has been preserved by Rowe, that the young noble was so favourably impressed



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by the young player, that, on one occasion, he presented him with a thousand pounds, to enable him to make a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. Rowe was startled by the magnitude of the gift, and remarked that 'if he had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably well acquainted with his affairs, he should not have ventured to have inserted it' in his life of the player. What the purchase could have been it is difficult to say. It could not have been the purchase of New Place in 1597; for the purchase-money of the Place was only sixty pounds, and Southampton was absent at the time, fighting with Essex against the Spaniards, as captain of *The Garland*. Neither could it have been the purchase of the Stratford estate in 1602; for at that time Southampton was attainted of high treason, and was a prisoner in the Tower. In fact, the whole sum expended by Shakspere in the purchase of lands and houses, according to Mr. Lee, did not amount to a thousand pounds in all (p. 162).*

Southampton, Lord Macaulay says, will be remembered to the latest ages as the generous and discerning patron of Shakespeare. But the patronage, if it existed, was one of a most mysterious kind. It was a patronage in which the patron

* On the value of money in the time of Shakespeare see Note B.

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never recognised the existence of the client, and in which the client never acknowledged his obligation to the patron. In the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece*, the poet says, 'What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours.' This was the fashion of the time. It was an age of dedications. Jonson dedicated his plays to the Court, to the Inns of Court, to the Lady Wroth, to the Lord Aubigny, to the Earl of Pembroke, to the King. Bacon dedicated his acknowledged works to the King, to the Prince, to the Duke of Buckingham, to the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. And yet, notwithstanding the protestations, warm and gushing as a geyser, of *The Rape*, not one of the Shakespearian Plays was dedicated to Southampton. The young Mæcenas was equally reserved. He took no notice of the sugared Sonnets; he never acknowledged the dedication of the Poems; he left no indication that he was acquainted with the author of the Plays. On three notable occasions he was brought into immediate contact with the Shakespearian Drama. He was present at the performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, at Gray's Inn, in 1594, and must have known the conjuror who was put upon his trial for foisting on the Inn the 'company of base and common fellows,' by whom it was performed. With Essex he 'requisitioned and paid for' the performance of *Richard the Second* at the Globe, on the afternoon before



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the Rebellion of 1601 (*Lee*, 317). *Love's Labour 's Lost* was performed at his house in 1604, after Sir Walter Cope had spent a whole morning in 'hunting for players, jugglers, and such kind of creatures,' to use the words of Sir Walter in writing to Lord Cranborne (*H. I. Sh.* i. 4). On none of these occasions did Southampton recognise the existence of the Player. Mr. Lee tells us that the state papers and business correspondence of Southampton are enlivened by references to his literary interests, and 'his sympathy with the great birth of English Drama' (p. 316); but Mr. Lee has extracted no reference to Shakspere from the papers. Even in Southampton's correspondence with his wife his connexion with the player and the plays, if any such existed, is a secret. In 1599, when he was commander of the horse in Ireland, the Countess writes to him, 'All the news I can send you, that I think will make you merry, is, that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is, by his mistress Dame Pintpot, made father of a goodly miller's thumb—a boy that 's all head and very little body; but this is a secret.' Mr. Lee thinks that the letter refers to Shakespeare (p. 317); and possibly it does. If so, it only suggests the ever-recurring question, Who was Shakespeare? The Jacobite blessed the King, and saw no harm in blessing the Pretender; but who the Pretender was, and who the King, *that*, he explained, was quite another thing.

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But in point of fact, the Sir John Falstaff of the Countess cannot be identified; her Dame Pintpot is a lady who is unknown to biographical research; her Miller's Thumb is a mere bodiless creation; and in no case can the letter of the Countess be regarded as portion of the contemporary evidence which is said to attest the responsibility of the Player for the works which were published under the name of Shakespeare.

It is strange that the only patron of Shakpere that is known to biographical research should have failed to attest his responsibility for the works which were more or less associated with his name; but it is still more curious that the young player himself should have failed to attest his own responsibility for works which would have brought him fame and wealth, and, what he seems to have valued more, position. In 1597 he had been ten years in London. During that period at least a dozen Shakespearian Dramas had been produced, but not one of them had been published. *Romeo and Juliet*, and the two *Richards*, were published anonymously in 1597, and the First Part of *Henry the Fourth* in 1598; but it was not till 1598 that any of the plays was published with the name of Shakespeare. In 1598, *Love's Labour 's Lost* was printed as by 'W. Shakespere,' which was a close approximation to the player's name; but in the same year *Richard the Second*, and *Richard*

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*the Third*, were published as by 'William Shakespeare,' the name, with or without the hyphen, under which everything Shakespearian subsequently appeared. If the young adventurer from Stratford was the author of the plays, it is strange that he should have remained for ten years in London without claiming the masterpieces, which would have made his name famous, and would have raised him above the base and common fellows with whom he had been classed in 1594, and the creatures so contemptuously described by Cope in 1604, when he had been nearly twenty years in London.

Of all the alleged testimonials to the responsibility of the young man who came up from Stratford for the works which appeared in the name of Shakespeare, none is more confidently appealed to than that of Francis Meres, whose *Palladis Tamia* was registered on the 7th of September 1598, and was published shortly after. Meres, as we learn from the *Dictionary of Biography*, was a Divine. In the preface to one of his sermons, entitled *God's Arithmetic*, he describes himself as Master of Arts in both Universities, and Student in Divinity. Eventually he became the Rector of a Parish. Meres, in his *Tamia*, writes of the 'mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare,' and his *Venus and Adonis*, and his *Lucrece*, and 'his sugared *Sonnets* among his private friends,' and the twelve plays of which he was the author, though at the time

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three only had been published with his name. But who this mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare was he does not say, and he does not pretend to know. Like most of his contemporaries, he is loud in his admiration of the works, but he says nothing of the man. Mr. Phillipps describes him as one of the intimate friends of Shakspere (i. 267, 8). But the author of *God's Arithmetic* was not likely to be intimate with players; and from the beginning to the end of the *Palladis Tamia* there is nothing to identify the mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare with Burbage's deserving man. The description of the Sonnets is sufficient to negative any such idea. They were not addressed to the private friends of a player, and could not have been distributed among them. Addressed as they were to a great noble, and a great lady, and dealing as they did with the most delicate affairs, no player, even if he was the author, would have dared to communicate them to Burbage, the tragedian, or to Kempe, the morrice-dancer, or to Hemming and Condell, the men-players, or to any other of his friends and fellows.

In February 1601, an event occurred which brought Essex and Southampton, Bacon and Shakspere, into actual contact; and if ever there was an occasion on which the Player's responsibility for the works, which were published under the name of Shakespeare, could have been attested, it was this. On Saturday, the 7th of

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February, *Richard the Second* was performed by the company of Shakspere on the requisition of Essex and Southampton (*Lee*, 317), and on the following Sunday the Earls broke out into rebellion. The performance of 'the play of deposing King Richard the Second,' as Bacon calls it, was regarded by the Queen as intended to prepare the public for the deposition of herself; and, accordingly, the performance was laid as an overt act of treason on the trial of the Earls. On that trial Bacon was counsel for the Crown, and, in his conversations with the Queen, the question of the authorship of the play must frequently have been discussed. The Queen who, as Bacon tells us, was so determined to discover the author of the story of the usurpation of King Henry, that she committed Hayward to the Tower, must have been equally curious as to the author of the play of deposing King Richard, which consigned Essex to the block. In the spacious times of great Elizabeth they had a summary way of dealing with the authors of obnoxious plays. In 1597, Nash was committed to the Fleet for what was regarded as 'sclaunderous and seditious matter' in *The Isle of Dogs*. In 1605, Jonson and Chapman were imprisoned for something that was displeasing to the King in *Eastward Ho!* And if Coke had the faintest idea that the Player was the author of *Richard the Second*, he would not have hesitated a moment to lay him by the heels. And that the

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Player was not regarded as the author by the Queen is proved by the fact that, with his company, he performed before the Court at Richmond, on the evening before the execution of the Earl.

On the death of Elizabeth, on the 24th of March 1603, James the First succeeded to the Crown, and, as might be expected from the son of the Queen of Scots, and the pupil of Buchanan, he was well disposed towards the stage. He took the Lord Chamberlain's servants into his own service; he gave them the rank of grooms of the chamber; he made them walk before him in procession, arrayed in scarlet cloaks, on his entry into London; and he ordered all municipal authorities to permit them to perform in their bailiwicks. Under these favouring circumstances, it seems as if, at one time, the Great Unknown was about to lay aside his coat of darkness. In 1609, *Romeo and Juliet* was for the first time published as the work of Shakespeare; in the same year *Shakespeare's Sonnets* appeared, with the intimation that Shakespeare was not really the name of the author, but was the noted weed in which he kept Invention; and in the same year *Troilus and Cressida* was published with the announcement that the Shakespearian Plays were the property of certain grand possessors.* The personality of the 'grand possessors' of the plays published under the name of

* As to the circumstances under which the collected edition of the Sonnets was published in 1609 see Note D.

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Shakespeare like that of the 'divers of worship,' who spread the report of Shakspere's facetious grace, and like that of the 'private friends' among whom the honey-tongued Shakespeare circulated his sugared sonnets, is not disclosed. One thing, at all events, is clear. The preface was a distinct challenge, and neither Burbage nor Shakspere thought proper to accept it. True, Mr. Lee, *ex informatâ conscientiâ*, avers that 'this address was possibly the brazen reply of the publishers to a more than usually emphatic protest on the part of players or dramatist against the printing of the piece' (p. 184). Possibly it was, for possibility is infinite. It is possible, for instance, that Bacon, who in 1590 regarded Southampton with passionate affection, was the author of the sonnets; and it is possible that Bacon, who in 1609 was Solicitor-General, was the grand possessor of the plays. It is possible, again, that the dedication of the sonnets to 'Mr. W. H.' was a device to mystify the public as to their 'only begetter'; and it is possible that the anonymous scribe who wrote the preface to the play was writing, not in the interest of a piratical publisher, but in the interest of the genuine author. Possibility, however, is not proof; and whatever we may regard as possible, one thing is absolutely certain. There is not a scintilla of evidence that, on any one occasion, either Burbage or Burbage's deserving man protested against the publication of any one of the Shakespearian plays.

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Mr. Lee himself admits that the 'only instance on record of a protest on Shakespeare's part against the many injuries which he suffered at the hands of contemporary publishers' is that attested by Heywood, who, in his *Apology for Actors*, published in 1612, speaks of the player as complaining to him that Jaggard had 'presumed to make so bold with his name' as to prefix it to *The Passionate Pilgrim*, which was published in 1599 (p. 145).

In 1611, the successful actor finally abandoned the stage, and settled down at New Place. This is the concurrent testimony of his Biographers—Mr. Phillipps, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Wyndham. But if the Shakspere of the stage retired, the Shakespeare of the plays remained; and as Shakespearian plays appeared before the Player arrived in London, so they continued to appear after he retired to Stratford. *The Tempest*, according to the best authorities, was written to celebrate the marriage of the Elector Palatine with the daughter of the King on the 14th of February 1613; and *Henry the Eighth* was being acted as 'a new play' when the *Globe* was burnt down on the 29th of the following June. Mr. Lee suggests that the Player on his retirement 'left with the manager of his company unfinished drafts of more than one play which others were summoned at a later time to complete' (p. 208); but this is a mere fancy, as little worthy of serious consideration as the forgeries which Mr. Lee attributes to Mr. Collier (pp. 304–6).

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When the Player retired from the stage he was only forty-six or forty-seven—the age at which our second Shakespeare was just commencing the immortal series of romances which, in their wit and humour, and their masculine grasp of men and things, are worthy to be ranked with the Shakespearian plays. The unanimous testimony of his biographers is to the effect that the retired actor took no further interest in theatrical affairs. According to Rowe, he spent the latter part of his life in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. According to Dr. Johnson, he made no collection of his plays, and showed no anxiety to give them to posterity in their genuine state. Mr. Phillipps is astonished at the apathy which he exhibited as to the fate of his immortal dramas (i. 242). And, finally, Mr. Lee admits that during the period of his retirement he seemed utterly 'unconscious of his marvellous superiority to his professional comrades' of the past (p. 224), and that he chiefly valued his literary attainments and successes 'as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters' (p. 225).

At the beginning of 1616, according to Mr. Lee, the Player's health was failing, and he gave instructions for his will (p. 218). This will—in which, by-the-by, he praises God that he is 'in perfect health'—was ready for his signature on the 25th of January in that year. On the 10th of February, his daughter Judith was married to Thomas Quiney,

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the son of an old friend, and for some reason, probably connected with the marriage, the execution of his will was delayed till the 25th of March. By this instrument he made pecuniary provision for Judith, and entailed his lands on his elder daughter; he carefully disposed of his wearing apparel, of his sword, of his silver-gilt bowl, and of his second best bed, which he bequeathed to his wife, with the furniture of the same; he made a number of small bequests to various friends for the purchase of memorial rings; he named his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, and his daughter, Susanna, as his executors and residuary legatees; and finally he requested two of his friends to act as 'overseers' of his will. Mr. Lee remarks the 'precision with which he accounts for and assigns every known item of his property' (p. 221); and Mr. Phillipps observes, that 'not only is there no mention of Drayton, Ben Jonson, or any of his other literary friends, but an entire absence of reference to his own compositions' (i. 241), or to books (i. 251). In fact, not a single book would seem to have been in his possession—not a copy of the Sonnets, the Poems, or the Plays—not one of the innumerable books on which the Sonnets, the Poems, and the Plays were founded —not one of the old plays which he is said to have touched up, recast, and made his own. He left behind him no literary correspondence; not a letter from Southampton, or Pembroke, or Montgomery, his reputed patrons—not a letter from Drayton or

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Jonson, his reputed friends—not a letter from mortal man referring to the works of which he was the reputed author. The only letter addressed to him that is extant is a letter from one of his Stratford friends, asking him for the loan of thirty pounds. Not a single fragment of any letter of his own has been discovered; and the only specimens which we possess of the handwriting of the reputed author of *Macbeth* and *Lear* are the words 'By me,' and five signatures, so execrable that, according to a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, 'the wonder is how, with such a hand, he could have written so much' as he is credited with writing.

On the 23rd of April, 1616, being suddenly attacked by a malady, which tradition attributes to debauch, he died. On the 25th of April, one month after he had executed his will, he was buried in the chancel of his parish church, and over the spot where his body was laid there was placed a slab, with an inscription which tradition attributes to himself:—

> Good frend, for Jesus sake, forbeare
> To digg the dust encloased heare;
> Bleste be the man that spares thes stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

An epitaph imprecating a curse on the man who should disturb his bones, an epigram on the money-lender with whom he dealt, and a ballad abusing the gentleman whose park he robbed—such are the compositions which tradition attributes to the man whom we venerate as Shakespeare.

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## V

### *Of Shakespeare and the Two Players*

If we accept the confession of the author of the *Sonnets* that Shakespeare was not his real name, but the 'noted weed' in which he kept Invention, and if we give credit to the announcement of the editor of *Troilus and Cressida* that the Shakespearian Comedies were the property of certain 'grand possessors,' we can explain much that seems inexplicable in the conduct of the retired Player. We can explain how it came to pass that he never claimed to be the author of the plays while he remained upon the stage; how it was that he took no interest in them after he retired to Stratford; how it happened that he made no mention of them in his will; and how it befell that his representatives took no steps to effect their publication after his decease.

The retired Player was buried on the 25th of April, 1616, and it was not till more than seven years after his death that a collected edition of the Shakespearian Plays was published. Towards the

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end of 1623 the First Folio appeared; and if we accept the declarations which it contains, almost every question which has agitated the minds of Shakespearian scholars in recent years would be definitively answered. In the first place, the Editors of the Folio ostentatiously present the Figure of the Stratford Player as the counterfeit presentment of the 'gentle Shakespeare'; and if so, they would seem to deprive the Baconian theory of all rational right to a hearing from reasonable men. In the second place, the Folio assumes that the Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies which it presents, were the exclusive work of Shakespeare; and if this be so, all ideas of collaboration and interpolation are excluded, and the unity of the author is established. In the third place, the Folio is presented to us as 'containing *all* his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies'; and if this be so, no plays but those contained in the Folio can be accepted as the work of Shakepeare. In the fourth place, the Folio professes to give the plays of Shakespeare 'perfect of their limbs,' and 'absolute in their numbers as *he* conceived them'; and if this be so, it follows that the Folio must be regarded as our supreme authority in the determination of the Shakespearian text, and that every passage, however brilliant, which has been imported into the text from the Quartos, must be regarded as a purple patch which overlays the final conception of the author.

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When such conclusions are to be deduced from the declarations of the Folio, it becomes important to ascertain the character and the credentials of the men under whose auspices it appeared. The famous volume did not appear under the personal control of Shakspere; its publication was not authorised by the representatives of Shakspere; and it was not accredited by the proprietors of the theatres with which Shakspere was connected. The Folio was given to the world by a pair of players of whom the ordinary reader knows nothing but that they were Shakspere's fellow-actors, and that in his will, by a good-natured afterthought, he left them twenty-six and eightpence apiece to buy them rings. Even Mr. Phillipps has but little more to tell us. In a sonnet on the burning of the Globe in 1613 'Henry Condye' is bracketed with 'the Fool' who escaped from the burning house (i. 285). From the parish records of Aldermanbury we learn that he was a 'sidesman' of the parish, and that he was buried in the parish churchyard on the 29th of December 1627. Hemming, we know, was one of the executors of Condell. It appears from documents in the office of the Lord Chamberlain that he was paid fifty pounds for five performances before the Court in 1595 and 1596(*H-P.* i. 341); that payments on the same scale were made to him 'for the pains and expenses of himself and company in playing and presenting six interludes or plays before his Majesty' in 1604 and 1605 (ii. 165, 6);



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and that similar payments were made to him for similar services in 1613 (ii. 87). Hemming therefore would seem to have been the treasurer of the Burbage troupe. Malone mentions a tradition that he was the original Falstaff (ii. 355). In the sonnet on the burning of the Globe he is described as 'old stuttering Heminges' (i. 285). This is all we know about him, unless we add that, like Condell, he was connected with the parish of Aldermanbury, and that, like Condell, he was interred in the churchyard of the parish on the 12th of October 1630. Such and so insignificant were the two men who in 1623 lent their names to usher in the most memorable book that the world has ever seen, or, in all probability, will ever see.

Of the thirty-six Shakespearian Plays which are collected in the Folio, fifteen, admittedly, were published in Shakspere's lifetime, and if, as we ought to do, we regard the *King John* of 1591, *The Contention* of 1594, *The True Tragedy* of 1595, and *The Taming of the Shrew* of 1594, 1596, and 1607, as in reality the works of Shakespeare, the plays published in the lifetime of the Player will amount to nineteen in number.* In any case

* If *Pericles* is to be regarded as the work of Shakespeare, the number of the Plays will amount to thirty-seven. But the Folio, which professes to give '*all* his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies,' deliberately omits the play; and Jonson in 1629 sneers at it as a stale and mouldy tale, which he would not have done if he had believed it to be Shakespeare's. *Pericles*

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seventeen at least remained unpublished at his death, a fact for which no adequate explanation has been offered. *Othello* was published for the first time in 1622, and the remaining sixteen dramas, namely, *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale*, the Third Part of *Henry the Sixth*, *Henry the Eighth*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*, were registered 'for their copy' by Blount and Jaggard on the 8th of November 1623.

The two Players are singularly incoherent in the account which they give of the manner in which they became possessed of the papers from which the Folio was printed. In the *Epistle Dedicatory* they are represented as saying, 'we have collected them and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphans guardians'; and accordingly Mr. Phillipps regards them as 'mere gatherers' who 'ransacked their dramatic stores for the best copies of the plays' (i. 263). In the *Address* 'To the great Variety of Readers,' on the other hand, the Players are made to say, that what their friend and fellow thought 'he uttered with such easiness that we

had been published in quarto in 1609 and 1611 and 1619, and it had been published as by Shakespeare. Its omission in the Folio, therefore, must have been a deliberate act, and not a default occasioned by any difficulty in finding or obtaining the original of the play.



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have scarce received from him a blot in his papers'; and accordingly Mr. Justice Madden holds that they gave the public 'what purported to be a complete collection of his works printed from the True Original Copies received by them at the hands of the Poet' (p. 320). The two Players are equally vacillating when they refer to the motives which induced them to hand over these invaluable papers to Blount and Jaggard. In the Dedication to the Incomparable Pair they declare that their sole object was to keep the memory of their friend alive; and yet in their Address to the great Variety of Readers the first word that escapes from them is 'Buy.'

Though the Players profess to give the Plays of the Author 'cur'd and perfect of their limbs' and 'absolute in their numbers as he conceived them,' they give expression to a wish that the Author had lived to set them forth and oversee them. Accordingly, Mr. Justice Madden warns us that 'it must never be forgotten that not one of the copies in the possession of Hemming and Condell, true original though it may have been, had been either written or revised by its author with a view to publication' (p. 358). This excites the astonishment of the learned Judge. 'That the author of *Othello* and *As You Like It*,' he says, 'should not have deemed those works worthy of the editorial care bestowed on *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*; that he used them simply as a means of making money, and, when that purpose

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had been served, took no further heed of them; that, notwithstanding the publication and rapid sale of pirated and inaccurate copies, he was never moved, during the years of his retirement at Stratford, to take even the initial step of collecting and revising for publication the manuscripts of his plays; and that, so far as their author was concerned, they might be stolen, travestied, or perish altogether; are surely among the strangest facts in the history of literature' (p. 319). Among the strangest facts in the history of literature, most surely, if the retired Player was in reality the author of *As You Like It* and *Othello*—facts so strange, indeed, as to suggest a doubt whether he could by any possibility have been the author. Nevertheless the facts stated by the learned Judge are accepted as authentic by all the biographers of Shakspere. In the opinion of all, he showed utter insensibility as to the literary value of the Shakespearian Plays, and utter indifference as to their preservation. Such was the opinion of Rowe and Dr. Johnson. Such was the opinion to which Pope gave poetical expression when he wrote that the author of the plays,

> For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
> And grew immortal in his own despite.

And such is the opinion of Mr. Phillipps and Mr. Lee. Pope, according to Mr. Lee, had 'just warrant for his surmise' (p. 225); and Mr. Phillipps declares that in this surmise the poet 'not only

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expressed the traditional belief of his own day, but one which later researches have unerringly verified' (i. 147).

Mr. Swinburne, in his *Study of Shakespeare*, gives a different turn to the discussion, and conducts us to a point of view from which a very different landscape lies before us. With characteristic vigour of expression, and with more than apostolic plainness of speech, he protests that 'of all vulgar errors the most wanton, the most wilful, and the most resolutely tenacious of life, is that belief bequeathed from the days of Pope, in which it was pardonable, to the days of Mr. Carlyle, in which it is not excusable, to the effect that Shakespeare threw off *Hamlet* as an eagle may moult a feather or a fool may break a jest; that he dropped his work as a bird may drop an egg or a sophist a fallacy; that he wrote for gain, not glory, or that having written *Hamlet* he thought it nothing very wonderful to have written' (p. 162). To expose this vulgar error, as he calls it, Mr. Swinburne proceeds to compare the Folio with the Quartos in their respective renderings of *Hamlet* and *Romeo*, of *Henry the Fifth* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. 'Of these four plays,' he says, 'the two tragedies at least were thoroughly recast, and rewritten from end to end: the pirated editions giving us a transcript, more or less perfect or imperfect, accurate or corrupt, of the text as it first came from the poet's hand; a text to be afterwards indefinitely modified and incalculably

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improved' (p. 103). As to *Hamlet*, he tells us that 'scene by scene, line for line, stroke upon stroke, and touch after touch, he went over all the old laboured ground again; and not to ensure success in his own day and fill his pockets with contemporary pence, but merely and wholly with a purpose to make it worthy of himself and his future students' (p. 163). *Romeo and Juliet*, Mr. Swinburne remarks, was actually 'rewritten' (p. 104). '*King Henry the Fifth*,' he says, 'is hardly less than transformed' in the Folio—'not that it has been recast after the fashion of *Hamlet*, or even rewritten after the fashion of *Romeo and Juliet*; but the corruptions and imperfections of the pirated text are here more flagrant than in any other instance; while the general revision of style by which it is at once purified and fortified extends to every nook and corner of the restored and renovated building' (p. 104). It is the same with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. 'In the original version of this comedy,' we are told, 'there was not a note of poetry from end to end' (p. 118); but 'when we turn from the raw rough sketch to the enriched and ennobled version of the present play' (p. 121), we find that the author 'strikes out some forty and odd lines of rather coarse and commonplace doggrel,' and 'makes room for the bright light interlude of fairy-land child's play which might not unfittingly have found place even within the moon-charmed circle of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (p. 123). Nor were these

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the only plays which, according to Mr. Swinburne, were thus elaborately revised. He shows the consummate skill with which the three plays that form the substance of *Henry the Sixth* were moulded into shape. He tells us how carefully the reviser corrected a false note, how delicately he added a finer touch, how admirably he perfected a meaning that was half expressed, how he gave full utterance to a tone of music that was half uttered, and how he invigorated sense and metre by the substitution of the right word for the wrong (p. 59). Mr. Swinburne goes still farther. 'Not one single alteration in the whole play,' he says when speaking of the revision of *Hamlet*, 'can possibly have been made with a view to stage effect, or to present popularity and profit' (p. 164). Nay, he affirms that 'every change in the text of *Hamlet* has impaired its fitness for the stage and increased its value for the closet in exact and perfect proportion' (*ibid.*). Elsewhere Mr. Swinburne recurs to the subject. 'There is not one of his contemporaries,' he says, 'whom we can reasonably imagine capable of the patience and self-respect which induced Shakespeare to re-write the triumphantly popular parts of Romeo, of Falstaff, and of Hamlet, with an eye to the literary perfection and performance of work, which, in its first outlines, had won the crowning suffrage of immediate and spectacular applause.' Indeed, of such patience and self-respect, of such anxiety for literary perfection we can only recollect one other instance. Bacon,

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in speaking of his own practice, says 'I ever alter as I add'; and his chaplain, Rawley, testifies that he himself had seen in Bacon's papers some dozen copies of his philosophical masterpiece, revised year by year, and every year polished and corrected till at last it was fashioned to the form in which it was committed to the press.*

Mr. Swinburne does not stand alone in recognising the value and extent of the Folio revision. Mr. Marshall, writing in the Henry Irving Shakespeare, expresses the opinion that the Second and Third Parts of *Henry the Sixth* as they appear in the Folio when compared with the older plays as they appear in the Quartos must have been 'the result of a careful revision and partial rewriting by one who was at once a poet and a practical dramatist' (ii. 6). Judge Madden confesses that in the case of *The Merry Wives*, 'the Quarto differs from the Folio as a rough draft from a completed work, not as an imperfect copy from an original document' (p. 113). The writers in the Irving Shakespeare recognise the fact that the Folio gives us a later and revised form of *Lear* (vi. 321). The Cambridge Editors, in comparing the Quartos of *Richard the Third* with the Folio edition of the

* Ipse reperi in archivis dominationis suae, autographa plus minus duodecim *Organi Novi* de anno in annum elaborati, et ad incudem revocati, et singulis annis ulteriore lima subinde politi et castigati, donec in illud tandem corpus adoleverat, quo in lucem editum fuit.

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play, admit that the author's original manuscript was at some time 'revised by himself, with corrections and additions, interlinear, marginal, and on inserted leaves.' Mr. Phillipps, in the preface to the Reduced Facsimile, admits that 'alterations,' 'omissions,' and 'additions' are to be detected in *Richard the Third* and *The Merchant of Venice* and *Troilus and Cressida* and *Much Ado.* In the case of *Henry the Fifth* Mr. Knight gives a specimen of the extent and minuteness of this Folio revision, and the method adopted by the reviser cannot be more felicitously expressed than in the words of Mr. Knight:—'In this elaboration the old materials are very carefully used up; but they are so thoroughly refitted and dovetailed with what is new that the operation can only be compared to the work of a skilful architect, who, having an ancient mansion to enlarge and beautify, with a strict regard to its original character, preserves every feature of the structure under other combinations, with such marvellous skill, that no unity of principle is violated, and the whole has the effect of a restoration in which the new and old are undistinguishable.'

When this great revision was effected we cannot tell. In all probability it had been effected long before 1623. *Love's Labour's Lost* was 'corrected and augmented' as early as 1598. A revised edition of the *Rape* was published in 1616. *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* were published as 'newly corrected and enlarged' by Shakespeare in

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1619. If we are to judge from the dates of the latest Quartos, the revision of *The Taming of the Shrew* must have been effected after 1607; that of *Henry the Fifth* after 1608; that of *Romeo and Juliet* after 1609; that of *Hamlet* after 1611; and so on. But the date of the revision is of little importance; the all-important fact is that, previously to the publication of the Folio, the plays had been laboriously and elaborately revised.

The fact of this revision enables us to dispose of a variety of Shakespearian questions. In the first place, it demonstrates that the editors of the Folio may be implicitly believed when they declare that in the Folio we possess the plays of Shakespeare 'cur'd and perfect of their limbs' and 'absolute in their numbers as he conceived them'; and in the next place it enables us to determine the true character of the *Originals* from which the Folio was printed. These Originals could not have been the 'autograph manuscripts' which the Author originally delivered to the two Players in their 'managerial capacity,' as Mr. Phillipps fancies (i. 269); for the two Players were not the managers, and the plays had been elaborately *revised*. Neither could they have been 'the acting versions' of the plays, as Mr. Lee maintains (p. 252); for the players, according to Mr. Lee, were interested in preventing the publication (p. 45), and, moreover, the plays had been revised, not for the stage, but for the *study*. Neither could they have been the 'revised

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autographs' of the Author; for notwithstanding the obliterations, the additions, and the modifications which are incident to a revision, the papers which the Players received had scarce a *blot*. The true Originals, therefore, from which the Folio was printed must have been fair copies of the revised manuscripts, intended for the press, and entrusted to the two Players as the medium of communication with the printers. And nothing can more conclusively show how utterly ignorant the two Players were of the real Shakespeare than the fact that they actually mistook the handwriting of the copyists for the handwriting of their friend and fellow, and relied upon the absence of erasures as a proof of the 'easinesse' with which he wrote.

The copies which were intrusted to Hemming and Condell must have been of considerable value. Jaggard, as Mr. Lee tells us, 'had long known the commercial value of Shakespeare's work' (p. 250). Mr. Lee, it is true, tells us that in the time of Shakespeare there was no such thing as copyright (p. 45), and that 'the law recognised no natural right in an author to the creations of his brain' (p. 76). But Mrs. Stopes seems to have bestowed considerable attention on the subject, and the lady is better informed than Mr. Lee. In her work, entitled *The Bacon-Shakespeare Question Answered* (p. 257), she gives a transcript of a decree of the Star Chamber, which recites, that the members of the Stationers' Company 'have great part of their

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estates in copies,' and that 'by ancient usage of the Company' the entry of a book in the Register of the Company had always been taken as evidence that the member making such entry was 'the Proprietor of such book or copy, and ought to have the sole printing thereof'; and the decree proceeds to protect this 'privilege and interest' by summary proceedings, which were much the same as those provided by the Copyright Act of 1862.* True, the copyright thus recognised by law was the copyright of the Stationer, but we have a remarkable illustration of the manner in which the Author, by means of the copyright of the Stationer, could assert his natural right to the creations of his brain. When the collected edition of the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher was published in 1647, the Stationer in his address to the Reader says:— ''Twere vain to mention the chargeableness of this work; for those who owned the manuscripts too well knew their value to make a cheap estimate of any of these pieces.' The owner of a manuscript, therefore, could make his bargain with the publisher of the day. Field, for instance, could not have become the proprietor of *Venus and Adonis* unless he had received the manuscript from Shakespeare. Humfrey could not have become the owner of the copyright of the *Essays* unless he had received the manuscript from Bacon. And Blount and Jaggard

* On Copyright in the time of Shakespeare see note C.

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could never have entered a collection of plays infinitely more valuable than those of Beaumont and Fletcher as their copy, unless they had come to an understanding with the 'grand possessors' of the manuscripts which had been so laboriously revised and so carefully preserved.

Important as these conclusions must be deemed, they sink into insignificance when compared with the conclusion which the revision suggests on the greatest of all literary questions. The revision of the Shakespearian Plays so conclusively established by recent criticism necessitates a reconsideration of the views which we have been accustomed to entertain respecting Shakespeare. In the light of this revision we cannot possibly accept the Shakespeare of Hemming and Condell —the Shakespeare who wrote with such 'easinesse' that there was 'scarce a blot upon his papers'—the Shakespeare 'that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) never blotted out a line.' Neither can we accept the Shakespeare of Mr. Phillipps—the Shakespeare who had no literary design (i. 102), who was unconscious of any literary mission (i. 105), who wrote without effort (i. 106), who had no thought of posthumous fame (i. 148), and who gave the world no revised edition of his works (i. 102). Neither can we accept the Shakespeare of Mr. Lee —the Shakespeare who 'traded in agricultural produce' (p. 162), and who only regarded his works as securing a provision for himself and daughters

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(p. 225). And as we must reject the popular belief, so we must reject the modification of the popular belief, which is maintained by Mr. Swinburne. For consider how the matter stands. If it was Shakspere who recast *Hamlet*, who rewrote *Romeo and Juliet*, who renovated and transformed *Henry the Fifth*, who enriched and ennobled *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, who tempered and enriched *The Taming of the Shrew*, and who with consummate skill touched up the three Plays which form the Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth*; if it was the Player who, to increase their value for the study, deliberately impaired their fitness for the stage; if, in fine, it was the Player who was resolved to make them worthy of himself and of his future students; if all this be admitted, the inevitable question rises, Why did the Player fail to publish what he had so laboriously prepared for publication? He was in the full possession of his powers. In his retirement he had ample leisure. He had no reason for concealment or disguise. If he was indifferent to fame, admittedly he was not indifferent to money. Among his contemporaries he had the reputation of being a somewhat grasping man. We know that when he was already a man of substance he sued one of his neighbours for a matter of two shillings, or, as Professor Dowden would express it, he bore down with unfaltering insistance on the positive fact that of all places in the universe the proper place for those two shillings was the pocket

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of William Shakspere (p. 33). Surely it must appear strange that with such an unfaltering insistance on his rights he should have left the copyright of his works to be assigned to Blount and Jaggard by a pair of players, and should not have bethought him that of all places in the universe the proper place for the price of an author's copyright was the pocket of the author.

It has been suggested that Shakspere disposed of his copyrights on his retirement from the stage in 1611; but there is no record of any such disposition, and the Register of the Stationers, under the date of the 8th of November 1623, expressly states that the masterpieces then registered by Blount and Jaggard 'were not formerly entered to other men' (*H-P.* i. 307). If, then, we are still to regard the retired player as the author and reviser of these masterpieces, we must suppose that the revised manuscripts from which they were printed were in his possession when he died. How, then, are we to account for the fact that he gave no directions for their publication in his will? Mr. Lee remarks 'the precision' with which his will 'accounts for and assigns every known item of his property' (p. 221). How, then, are we to explain the fact that his literary property was unaccounted for and unassigned? As a business man familiar with theatrical affairs he must have known the commercial value of Shakespeare's work as well as Jaggard; and even if he merely looked upon his literary labours

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as securing a provision for his daughters, he would not have left his copyrights to be sold by Hemming and Condell to the syndicate of which Jaggard was the head. Mere forgetfulness is out of the question as an explanation of this silence of the will. We cannot suppose that the testator who remembered his doublet and his hose, his sword and his gilded bowl, his second best bed and its furniture, forgot that he was the author of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, of *Othello* and *Macbeth*, and the other masterpieces which were registered by Jaggard after his death, to say nothing of the masterpieces which were published in his lifetime, and which he had re-written or revised.

Even this does not exhaust the difficulties of the case. The will of the retired player named his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. Hall as his executors and residuary legatees; and if we can suppose that by some strange inadvertence the testator overlooked his literary property it would have passed by his residuary bequest. Dr. Hall was a man of business, and proved the will of his father-in-law on the 26th of June 1616, two months after his decease, but he never dreamt of claiming the Shakespearian plays as a portion of his residuary estate. Mr. Phillipps suggests that Hall was a puritan, and that this would explain his 'indifference for the fate of any dramatic manuscripts that might have come into his hands' (i. 250). But even



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puritans are not indifferent to money, and, puritan or no puritan, he erected the pretentious monument to the memory of the Player which endowed him with the judgment of Nestor, the genius of Socrates, and the art of Maro, and glorified him as the author of the plays which he was too sanctimonious to publish.

If in the absence of all evidence, and in defiance of all probability, we maintain that Hemming and Condell received the revised manuscripts from which the Great Folio was printed 'at the hands' of Shakspere, a final difficulty has to be confronted. If the two Players received them at the hands of Shakspere they must have received them before the spring of 1616; how, then, did it happen that they did not publish them till the autumn of 1623? The two Players profess that their only aim was to do an office to the dead and to procure guardians for the orphans of his genius; but for seven long years they failed to do their office, and for seven long years they left his orphans to the mercies of the world. And by what extraordinary conjunction of the planets did it happen that they awoke to a sense of their responsibilities and launched the Shakespeare Folio in 1623, the very year in which the press was groaning with the Folios of Bacon?

The Players in speaking of their friend and fellow say, 'we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.' The Players undoubtedly received the papers as *his*, but as they could not

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possibly have received them from *him*, the question rises, From whom did they receive them? The Cambridge Editors suggest that the Dedication and the Address which constitute the Preface of the Folio may have been written by some literary man in the employment of the Publishers and merely signed by the two Players. It is a most plausible suggestion. The style of the compositions is not that of ordinary actors. The *Epistle Dedicatory* reminds one in many respects of Bacon's dedications. The Incomparable Pair of Brethren, for instance, are said to have 'prosequuted' the Author of the Plays with favour. This use of the word *prosecute* is not to be found in any English Dictionary; in fact it is one of those Latinisms which Bacon habitually affected, and the origin of which is only to be found in such Ciceronian expressions as 'Posidonium honorificis verbis *prosecutus* est,' and 'equitem Romanum beneficiis ac liberalitate *prosequebantur*.' Nor is this the only trace of the fine Roman hand of the great writer that is to be detected in the *Epistle*. It was always with 'a kind of religious address' that Bacon approached his patron of the moment; and the country hands that reach forth milk and cream and fruits—the nations that in default of gums and incense approach their deities with a leavened cake—the ennobling of the meanest things when dedicated to a temple—these are echoes, and not distant echoes, of the very words of Bacon.



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But whatever may be the conclusion at which we arrive as to the author of the *Dedication*, we can arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the author of the *Address* to the great Variety of Readers. The Address contains a number of peculiar phrases. In speaking of his author the writer says to the reader, 'if you do not like him surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him.' This was a favourite idea of Jonson's. In his *Underwoods*, when addressing an author who concealed his name, he says that if the reader

> Only doth desire
> To understand, he may at length admire;

and in the very first of his *Epigrams* he warns the reader,

> Pray thee, take care, that tak'st my book in hand
> To read it well—that is to understand.

Again, the writer of the Address states that in the Folio the plays of Shakespeare are presented to the reader 'absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.' This is no player's phrase. It is a phrase employed by the classical writers to denote absolute perfection. Thus Cicero speaks of the material world as 'mundus expletus omnibus suis numeris,' and Pliny describes a book which he admired as 'liber numeris omnibus absolutus.' It was a favourite phrase of Jonson's. When he published his *Sejanus* he was careful to remind the

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reader that the book was not the same 'in all numbers' as the play which was acted on the stage; in the dedication of his *Epigrams* to the Earl of Pembroke he says the persons whom he describes may not answer 'in all numbers' to the description; in his *Underwoods* he alludes to Sir Kenelm Digby as 'a gentleman absolute in all numbers'; and in his *Discoveries* he speaks of Bacon as one 'who hath filled up all numbers,' not as conveying that Bacon had written every species of verse, but as conveying that in everything he wrote he was absolutely perfect. These parallelisms of expression are suggestive of the authorship of Jonson; but there is one passage in the *Address* which may fairly be regarded as conclusive. 'Well,' says the writer to the reader, 'it is now publique, and you will stand to your privileges, we know, to read and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a book, the Stationer says. Then, how odd soever your brains be, or your wisdoms, make your licence the same, and spare not. Judge your six-pen'orth, your shilling's worth, your five shillings' worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But whatever you do, Buy.' These 'rates' are in reality Jonson's. In the articles of agreement between the spectator and the author, in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, it is agreed that 'every person here have his or their free-will of censure, the author having now departed with his right'; and it is provided that 'it shall be lawful

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for any man to judge his six-pen'orth, his twelve-pen'orth, so to his eighteen-pence, two shillings, half-a-crown, to the value of his place, provided always his place get not above his wit.' 'Marry,' says Jonson, 'if he drop but sixpence at the door, and will censure a crown's worth, it is thought there is no conscience or justice in that.'

We may therefore safely accept the suggestion of the Cambridge Editors that the documents which constitute the preface of the Folio were written by some literary man to be signed by the two players; and if we come to the conclusion that this literary man was Jonson, we can scarcely be wrong in believing that it was from Jonson that Hemming and Condell received the unblotted papers from which the Folio was printed. Let us see what Jonson has to say upon the subject.

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## VI

### *Of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson*

MR. HALLAM tells us that of the young man who came up from Stratford we know next to nothing. Mr. Lee, on the contrary, tells us that in his case 'an investigation extending over two centuries has brought together a mass of detail which far exceeds that accessible in the case of any other contemporary professional writer' (p. 299). Among the contemporary professional writers the most eminent was Jonson; let us then compare what we know of Shakspere with what we know of Jonson, and see which of the two we are to trust, Mr. Lee or Mr. Hallam.

What in point of fact do we really know of the young man who came up from Stratford? Mr. Phillipps in his *Outlines* shows that we know nothing of him from his baptism in 1564 to his apprenticeship in 1577; that we have no information whatever as to his occupations from his apprenticeship in 1577 to his marriage in 1582 (i. 57);

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that from his marriage in 1582 to his flight from Stratford in 1587 we know nothing of him but the birth and baptism of his children; and that from 1587 to 1592 there is not a single particle of evidence respecting his career (i. 83). In default of positive evidence the traditions accepted by his biographers as authentic inform us that while he remained at Stratford he was a butcher's apprentice and a poacher, and that when he arrived in London his first occupations were those of a horseboy and a 'serviture.' Apart from tradition we know nothing about his life in London till the end of 1592, when we know that he had become an actor.

Mr. Lee states that his first successes were achieved under the auspices of Henslowe; but Henslowe, copious as he is in his references to contemporary writers for the stage, makes no mention whatever of his name. During the whole of his career, so far as it is known, he was associated with the Burbages; and all that the Burbages have to say about him is that he was one of their men-players and deserving men. Mr. Lee states that the only patron of the Player that is known to biographical research is Southampton (p. 103); but Southampton has not given us a hint of his existence. Mr. Phillipps states that as far as the social distinctions of the age permitted he was intimately acquainted not only with Southampton but with Essex and Rutland and the other leaders of the Rebellion of 1601; but

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Essex and Rutland and the rest are as silent as to the acquaintanceship as 'his own Maecenas.' The Folio is dedicated to Pembroke and Montgomery, who are said to have 'prosequuted' the author with much favour; but neither Pembroke nor Montgomery took the slightest notice of the Player. *The Comedy of Errors* was performed before the gentlemen of Gray's Inn; but to the gentlemen of Gray's Inn Shakspere was merely one of the 'company of base and common fellows' whom the conjuror had foisted on the society. *Richard the Second* was performed by the company to which Shakspere belonged on the eve of the Rebellion of 1601, and though the performance was treated as an overt act of treason there is no mention whatever of anyone connected with the company except Augustine Philipps (*H-P.* ii. 360). *Love's Labour 's Lost* was performed at the house of Southampton for the amusement of Anne of Denmark in 1604, but Burbage alone is mentioned in connexion with the performance and Shakspere passed unnoticed among the 'players, jugglers, and such kind of creatures' whom the Court officials were engaged in hunting up (*H. I. Sh.* i. 4). The 'private friends' to whom the Sonnets were addressed, the 'divers of worship' who reported his facetious grace in writing, the 'grand possessors' who claimed to be the owners of the Plays—not one of these has left a single memorial of the man.

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London in the time of Shakspere was full of professional writers more or less connected with the stage. There was Marlowe, 'the famous gracer of Tragedians,' and Peele, 'the Atlas of Poetry,' and Lodge, the 'young Juvenal,' and Nash, the indefatigable pamphleteer, to whom we are indebted for so much of our knowledge of the literary history of his times; but not one of these has left the slightest intimation that he was personally acquainted with the actor. Greene mentions him, but only to denounce him as an upstart; Chettle recognises his excellence in the quality that he professed, but admits that he had not the advantage of his acquaintance; Meres glorifies the honey-tongued Shakespeare, but he does not give us the slightest idea who the honey-tongued Shakespeare really was. Forman has left us an account of performances of *Macbeth*, and *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline*, at the Globe in 1610 and 1611; but, though he minutely describes the Plays, he says nothing of the Player. That the Shakspere of the Stage should to some extent be confounded with the Shakespeare of the Plays was inevitable. Manningham, who records the performance of *Twelfth Night* in the Hall of the Middle Temple in 1601, relates the loose adventure in which William the Conqueror is said to have come before King Richard. Camden, in his *Britannia*, when speaking of the Parish Church of Stratford, says:—'In the chancel lies William Shakspeare, a native of this place, who has given

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ample proof of his genius and great abilities in the forty-eight plays he has left behind him'—a remark which shows how little Camden knew of the real author. Among the contemporary notices of Shakespeare adduced by Mr. Phillipps (ii. 154) that of Davies of Hereford is the only one which clearly identifies the Player with the Poet; and how competent the Hereford Poetaster was to form a judgment on the subject is evident from the terms in which he addresses the man whom he supposed to be the author of *Macbeth* and *Lear*:—

> Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
> Had'st thou not play'd some kingly parts in sport,
> Thou had'st bin a companion for a king,
> And been a king among the meaner sort.

London, in the time of Shakespeare, abounded, as we have said, in literary men—poets, playwrights, and pamphleteers — men who were incessantly engaged either in mutual admiration or in internecine feud. But not one of them can be adduced as attesting the responsibility of the Player for the works which are associated with his name. As far as they refer to him they regarded him as nothing but a player. Greene, in *The Groatsworth*, classed him with 'those puppits who speak from our mouths'; the author of *Ratsei's Ghost* speaks of him as one who had bought some place or lordship in the country, and no longer cared for those that formerly made him 'proud with speaking their words upon the stage' (*H-P.* i. 300); and the

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scholars in *The Return from Parnassus* sneer at him as one of those who

> With mouthing words that better wits have framed
> Now purchase lands, and now Esquires are made.

It was the custom among the literary men of the day to belaud their friends in verse more or less 'tolerable, and not to be endured.' But Shakspere was honoured with no such marks of admiration. Not a single copy of complimentary verses was addressed to him on the publication of any of the plays; not a single rhymer bewailed his retirement from the stage; not a single threnody was chanted on the occasion of his death; and when the Great Folio was published the only warblers that could be procured to sing his praise were Leonard Digges and Hugh Holland, and an immortal of whom we know nothing but the inanity of his verses and the initials of his name. But why continue the discussion? As Mr. Lee admits that Southampton is the only patron of Shakspere that is known to biographical research (p. 102), so he admits that Jonson is the only contemporary who has left on record any definite impression of the personality of the Player as a man (p. 224).

Let us, then, compare this mass of detail, as it is called, with the mass of detail which is accessible to us in the case of the great contemporary writer. Born in the city of London in the early part of 1574, Jonson was ten years younger than Shakspere, and

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in almost every respect he presents a contrast to the older man. He was the son of a clergyman, and the grandson of a man of family in Scotland. He was educated at Westminster School, and in the dedication of his first successful play to Camden he points with affectionate pride to the fact that Camden was his tutor. He was an exhibitioner of Cambridge. Having embraced literature as a profession he became one of the most prolific writers of his age. His plays are second only to those of Shakespeare; his masques are inferior only to those of Milton; his poems display much of the vigour and the verve of Dryden; and his airy lyrics still haunt the memory and flutter round the lips of men. In the course of time he became Chronologer to the City of London and Poet Laureate to the King; and it was in his favour that Charles granted the famous tierce of canary, which was continued as a perquisite of the office to his successors. In the prosecution of his studies he collected a library so extensive that Gifford doubted whether any library in the kingdom was so rich in scarce and valuable books. The commonplace-books in which he recorded the results of his reading were so numerous and so systematically kept that Falkland expressed his astonishment at the extent and variety of his collections. According to Isaac D'Israeli no poet has left behind him so many testimonials of personal fondness by inscriptions and addresses in the copies of his

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works which he presented to his friends; and, it may be added, no poet received such enthusiastic testimonials of regard and admiration from the friends to whom they were presented. Prefixed to his various writings we see commendatory verses from Marston, from Heywood, from Chapman, from Beaumont, from Fletcher, from Waller, and from Herrick. Six months after his death the *Jonsonus Virbius* was published containing elegies dedicated to his memory by some thirty of the most eminent men of letters of the day. Camden was his life-long friend. Selden submitted his writings to him 'to show how ambitious he was, not only of his love, but of his judgment.' He supplied a History of the Punic Wars to Raleigh, when Raleigh was compiling his History of the World. He acted as Aristarchus to Hobbes, when Hobbes was writing his translation of Thucydides. Like Hobbes, he was one of the good pens whom Bacon, in his fear that modern languages would play the bankrupt with books, employed to immortalise his works in Latin. Herrick, in his well-known ode describing the lyric feasts at The Sun, The Dog and The Triple Tun, declares that Jonson's verse

> Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

Everyone who aspired to be thought a wit was anxious to be admitted to the chamber in The Old Devil, which was 'The Tavern Academy of

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Ben.' Beaumont, when lying among the hay-makers in the country, dreamt of 'the full Mermaid wine' of Jonson's eloquence and wit. Pembroke and Newcastle and Portland, Aubigny and Falkland, the Spencers and the Sidneys, were not only his patrons but his friends. Falkland, in the elegy which he wrote upon his death, exclaims,

> To him how daily flocked, what reverence gave,
> All that had wit, or would be thought to have!

In short, Jonson among the men of his day occupied a position of literary supremacy similar to that which was occupied by Dryden in the succeeding age, and even at the present time Claude Halcro's 'Glorious John' does not loom larger through the mists of the past than 'Rare Ben Jonson.'

That we should know so much about Jonson and so little about Shakspere, that Jonson should have been the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, and that Shakspere should have attracted so little notice, must be admitted to be strange if Shakspere was generally regarded by his contemporaries as the author of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *Lear*. This absence of recognition cannot be ascribed to the retiring character of the Player. He was a pushing man. He was desirous to be thought a gentleman. He deduced his pedigree from a fictitious ancestor who, he audaciously averred, had rendered important

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services to Henry the Seventh. He pestered the Heralds for a coat of arms. He inherited his father's love of litigation. He was rigorous in the assertion of his rights. In one capacity or another he was constantly before the public, and yet the public took so little notice of him that practically, as Mr. Hallam says, what we know of him is next to nothing. If the author of the plays was some Great Unknown who kept invention in a noted weed and flitted across the stage as the mere shadow of a name, our ignorance of his personality might be explained. But how can we explain the indifference with which the world regarded Shakspere if we consider *him* to have been the author?

As a playwright by profession Jonson could not fail sooner or later to become acquainted with Burbage and his deserving men. The occasion of his first acquaintance with Shakspere, we are told by Rowe, was a remarkable piece of humanity on Shakspere's part. *Every Man in His Humour*, we are told, was on the point of being rejected by the company to which Shakspere belonged when the Player interposed on its behalf and secured its acceptance by his fellows. Gifford very properly regards this as mere Shaksperian myth. The play in a less popular shape had been successfully brought out by Henslowe, and it is not to be supposed that when it had assumed its present form the magnificent comedy, which is one of the glories

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of the stage, would have been rejected by the company of Burbage. Nor is this the only Shaksperian myth by which posterity has been amused. Fuller in his *Worthies of England* talks of the wit combats between Jonson and Shakspere, 'which two,' he says, 'I behold like a Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war,' developing the contrast in language which must be familiar to every reader. But Fuller, who was born in 1608, was only eight years old when Shakspere died, and if he beheld the wit combats of the two, he could only have beheld them in a species of apocalyptic vision. L'Estrange relates that Shakspere was god-father to one of Jonson's children, and that upon the occasion he said, 'I' faith, Ben, I 'll e'en give her a dozen of *latten* spoons and thou shall translate them.' The Ashmole Papers record how Mr. Jonson and Mr. Shakspere being merry at a tavern challenged one another to cap verses, and how Mr. Jonson said, 'Here lies Ben Jonson Who was once one,' and how Mr. Shakspere replied 'That while he lived was a slow thing, And now, being dead, is no thing.' Then there is the tradition how Shakspere anticipated Burbage in some loose amour and boasted that William the Conqueror came before King Richard. Such are our only specimens of the wit of him who is supposed to have created Falstaff.

Whatever was the original intimacy between the Poet and the Player, they ultimately quarreled.



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In 1601 Jonson bitterly complained that for three years he had been provoked by his enemies 'on every stage,' and he taxes 'some of the players' as being parties to the conspiracy against him. Of his enemies the principal were Marston and Dekker, and of the hostile players Shakspere was the chief. In *The Return from Parnassus*, a play which, as Mr. Arber shows, was performed by the gentlemen of the University of Cambridge in December 1601, Shakspere is described by Kempe, the morrice-dancer of the Globe, as 'putting down' all the University men, 'ay, and Ben Jonson, too.' Jonson, he says, 'brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.' It was in *The Poetaster* that he bewrayed it. The play had been performed a month or two before;* and in it Jonson, wreaked his vengeance on his foes. Mr. Gifford takes it upon himself to affirm that *The Poetaster* does not contain a single passage that can be tortured by the utmost ingenuity of malice into a reflection on our great Poet; but whether it reflects on the Poet or not, it certainly reflects upon the Player. In the Prologue to the Play a personification of *Envy* is introduced which asks,

> Are there no Players here, no Poet-apes,
> That come with basilisk's eyes, whose forkèd tongues
> Are steep'd in venom, as their hearts in gall?

* It was registered on the 21st of December 1601, and was published some time in 1602.

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The Poet-ape, as we shall see, was Jonson's name for Shakspere. It is evidently to Shakspere that Tucca refers when he reminds players that 'they are in the statute which made them rogues and vagabonds, unless enrolled as some nobleman's servants, the rascals'; 'they are blazoned there,' he says—'there they are tricked, they and their pedigrees—they need no other heralds, I wis.'* And it certainly is Shakspere who is depicted by Tucca when he says to Histrio, 'There are some of you players, honest gent'man-like scoundrels, and suspected to ha' some wit, as well as your poets, both at drinking and breaking of jests, and are companions for gallants.' 'Dost thou know that *Pantalabus* there?' he asks; and on Histrio's replying that he did not, Tucca continues—'go, and be acquainted with him then; he is a gent'man, parcel-poet, you slave; his father was a man of worship, I tell thee. Go, he pens high, lofty, and in a new stalking strain, bigger than half the rhymers i' the town again; he was born to fill thy mouth, Minotaurus, he was; he will teach thee to tear and rand. Rascal, to him, cherish his muse, go; thou hast forty—forty shillings, I mean, stinkard; give him in earnest, do; he shall write for thee, slave.' That Pantalabus was a player who had given mortal offence to Jonson is evident, and how

* Jonson, in all probability, derived his knowledge of Shakspere's application to the Heralds from Camden who was Clarencieux.



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bitterly Jonson resented the offence is shown by a passage which he added to *The Poetaster* in the edition of 1616. In that edition 'old Trebatius, the great lawyer,' is represented as expostulating with Horace for condescending 'to wound Pantalabus, railing in his saucy jests,' and, in the person of Horace, Jonson replies that he loves peace,

> But he that wrongs me, better, I proclaim,
> He never had assay'd to touch my fame;
> For he shall weep, and walk, with every tongue
> Throughout the city infamously sung.

So powerfully was Jonson affected by the purge which Shakspere had administered; so bitterly did he resent the efforts which Shakspere, in conjunction with his other enemies, had made to put him down.

If there should be any lingering doubt whether the Pantalabus of *The Poetaster* was meant for Shakspere, it will be dispelled by the *Book of Epigrams*, in which Jonson translates his Greek into plain English and denounces the Player as a Poet-ape who 'takes up all':—

> On Poet-Ape.
>
> Poor Poet-ape, that would be thought our chief,
> Whose works are e'en the frippery of wit,
> From brokage is become so bold a thief,
> As we, the robb'd, leave rage, and pity it.
> At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
> Buy the reversion of old plays, now grown
> To a little wealth, and credit in the scene,
> *He takes up all*, makes each man's wit his own,

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And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes
The sluggish gaping auditor devours;
He marks not whose 'twas first, and aftertimes
May judge it to be his, as well as ours.
Fool! as if half-eyes will not know a fleece
From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece.

Sir Theodore Martin, in his monograph entitled *Shakespeare or Bacon*, admits that the epigram refers to Shakspere, but contends that the attack on the Player was made by Jonson in his early days (p. 37), and that he subsequently declared that he loved the man, on this side idolatry, as much as any (p. 38). But Sir Theodore does not seem to be aware that the epigram was first published in the collected edition of Jonson's works which appeared in 1616, the year of Shakspere's death; and he does not seem to be aware that in his dedication of the *Book of Epigrams* to the Earl of Pembroke, the elder of the Incomparable Pair of Brethren, Jonson says that though all his characters may not answer, in all numbers, the pictures he has made of them, yet his epigrams were 'the ripest of his studies.'

It is interesting to compare the judgments which were formed of the successful Player by two of the most competent judges, one at the commencement and the other at the close of his career. No two men could have been more competent to form an estimate of his personality and his pretensions than Greene and Jonson. Both were men of education;

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both were men of genius; both were professionally connected with the stage; and both were personally acquainted with the Player. To Greene, in 1592, the Player was an 'upstart crow'; to Jonson, in 1616, he was a 'Poet-ape'; to Greene he was a 'buckram gentleman'; to Jonson he was a 'gentle-like scoundrel,' who affected the company of gallants. Greene denounced him as a man 'with a tiger's heart wrapp'd in a player's hide'; and Jonson denounced him as a man whose 'tongue was steep'd in venom and his heart in gall.' Greene, in his *Farewell to Folly*, sneers at authors 'who get some other Batillus to set his name to their verses,' so that 'the ass was made proud by their underhand brokery'; and it is at least a curious coincidence that Jonson charges Shakspere with having commenced his career with 'brokage.' Greene, in 1592, sneered at the young Shakescene for supposing that he could bombast out blank verse with the best, and declared that he was a mere puppet that spoke from the mouth of others; but in 1616, and for that matter in 1601, Jonson acknowledges that the Player was a 'parcel-poet,' that he had 'some wit,' that he could 'pen,' that he could 'write,' that he had his 'muse,' that he was to be credited with 'works,' and that these works might possibly survive to 'aftertimes.' True, he was only a 'parcel-poet,' a poet who, like a goblet parcel-gilt, was not genuine gold but gilding. True, he could write, but he could only write in a 'stalking strain,' the

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strain of the strolling player.* True, he claimed his 'works'; but his works were the mere 'frippery of wit.' Whether these works were old plays of which he had purchased the reversion; whether they were old histories which were unclaimed by forgotten authors; whether they were the spurious plays which were foisted on the world as Shakespeare's; or whether they were centos of stolen wit which, like Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, he had picked up at the tavern or the club; whatever they were, Jonson speaks of them with undisguised contempt. They were the mere frippery of wit; they were the petty larcenies of a literary thief; they were not a fleece, but mere locks of wool; they were mere shreds of stolen wit, and could not be mistaken for a piece.

It is possible that Shakspere, like Holcroft, on emerging from the stable might have written for the stage. But whatever he wrote, we cannot believe that Jonson's epigram on the Poet-ape was meant for the Poet, who before 1601 had written *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Much Ado*, and *Twelfth Night*, and who, before 1616, had astonished the world with *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, with *The Tempest* and

* Stalkers, in the time of Jonson, was the name for Strollers, who, in the words of *The Poetaster*, 'stalk upon boards and barrel-heads to an old cracked trumpet.'

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*The Winter's Tale.* It could not have been these miracles of genius which Jonson stigmatised as the frippery of wit; for he pronounced them to be 'such that neither man nor muse could praise too much.' It could not have been *their* author whom he satirised as a Parcel-poet and a Poet-ape; for he hailed him as the 'Star of Poets.' And we cannot possibly identify the man who was to walk throughout the city infamously sung with the man whose memory Jonson honoured, on this side idolatry, as much as any.

In the concluding Act of *The Poetaster* Augustus is represented as asking his poets for their 'true thought of Virgil'; and in answer to the imperial question Horace, who was the counterfeit presentment of Jonson, replies that he was a spirit

> Bearing the nature and similitude
> Of a right heavenly body.

And Tibullus, anticipating the remark of Dr. Johnson that a system of civil and economical prudence might be collected from the works of Shakespeare, observes:—

> That which he hath writ
> Is with such judgment labour'd, and distill'd
> Through all the needful uses of our lives,
> That could a man remember but his lines,
> He should not touch at any serious point
> But he might breathe his spirit out of him.

Who, then, is to be regarded as the Virgil of *The Poetaster*?

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When Jonson first became acquainted with Bacon we cannot tell. *Every Man Out of his Humour* was produced in 1599, and, in his dedication of the play to the Inns of Court, Jonson boasts that he enjoyed the friendship of members of their societies who were great names in learning. In his *Discoveries* he describes the effect of Bacon's eloquence upon the Judges, so that he must have known him while he was still practising at the bar. In the preface to the *Troilus and Cressida* of 1609 the writer declares that the comedies of the grand possessors 'are so framed to the life that they serve for the most common commentaries of all the actions of our lives'; and these words are so similar to what is said of Virgil in *The Poetaster* that they cannot fail to suggest the idea that Jonson was the author of the preface—the more so as the 'armed prologue' of Jonson's play reappears as the 'prologue armed' of the verses by which the play of the grand possessors is formally introduced. In his *Bartholomew Fair*, which was performed on the 31st of October 1614, Jonson ridicules 'those that beget tales and tempests and suchlike drolleries,' and Drummond of Hawthornden, on the alleged authority of Jonson, relates that he had written an apology for the play 'in my Lord St. Aubanie's house.'*

* Mr. Phillipps, however, is of opinion that Jonson's 'drolleries' referred to the tales and tempests of the puppet-shows and not to *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare.

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In any case Bacon was on intimate terms with Jonson long before he was created Lord St. Alban. In 1617, when he was Lord Keeper, he engaged Jonson to compose a masque for the Christmas Revels of his Inn. In the summer of 1618, when Jonson was setting out on his pedestrian tour to Scotland, Bacon told him that he loved not to see poesie going on any feet but the dactyl and the spondee. In January 1620 Jonson was present at the famous banquet in York House with which Bacon as 'England's High Chancellor' celebrated his entrance on his sixtieth year; and Jonson in his poem on the event not only glorifies the Chancellor but apostrophises the Genius of the Pile 'as if some mystery it did.'

On the 27th of January 1621 the great philosopher was created Viscount St. Alban, and he wrote to the King, 'this is the eighth rise or reach, a diapason in music, even a good number, and accord for a close.' Unfortunately this was not destined to be the close of his devious career. In the following March his Nemesis overtook him, and he fell. He fell; and, like the fallen Archangel, he was hurled into an abyss of misery and shame. Nothing in his whole career is so worthy of admiration as the manner in which he bore himself in this period of disaster and disgrace. He fled for refuge to literature. He resumed his studies. He completed the works on which, according to his own account, he had

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been pondering for thirty years. He died in the prosecution of his labours. The manly energy which he displayed during the last five years of his life is only to be paralleled by the courage with which Scott, when crushed by financial ruin, and overwhelmed with domestic bereavement, and enfeebled by advancing years, devoted himself for a like period to the performance of his literary tasks. Jonson assisted the fallen Chancellor in his labours. It is probable that he assisted him in the preparation of the *Novum Organum*, which was published in 1620, and it is an undoubted fact that the Latin of the *De Augmentis*, which was published in 1623, was the work of Jonson. It may be assumed therefore that Jonson was assisting Bacon in the publication of his works in 1623, when the Shakespeare Folio appeared; and it is absolutely certain that he assisted in the publication of that memorable volume. We have every reason to believe that he was the writer of the Address to the great Variety of Readers, and we know that he was the writer of the verses to the memory of 'The Author,' and of the lines to 'The Reader' which face the title-page of the famous book.

It is here that the mystery begins. In *The Poetaster*, in the *Book of Epigrams*, to the last day of Shakspere's life, Jonson had denounced the Player as an impudent impostor; but in the Flyleaf of the Folio, with the Figure of the Player before him,

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and writing apparently for the information of posterity, Jonson says

> This Figure that thou here seest put,
> It was for gentle Shakespeare cut.

Here the tables are completely turned. Up to this point the Baconian, arguing from the circumstances of the Player's life, has contended that Shakspere could not possibly have been the author of the plays, and that therefore the author must be Bacon. Now the Shaksperian, relying on the Figure, contends that Bacon could not possibly have been the author, and that the author in reality was Shakspere. The force of the argument cannot be overlooked or disregarded. Of all the contemporaries of Shakespeare none formed so adequate a conception of his supreme excellence as Jonson. He was personally acquainted with the Philosopher and with the Player. He must have known which of them was the author of the plays; and in 1623, when ushering in the first collected edition of the immortal works, he undoubtedly leads us to believe that the author was not the Philosopher but the Player. This has satisfied the world. It was the Figure that induced Milton to describe the most learned, if not the most laboured, of compositions as the native wood-notes of a rustic warbler. It was the testimony of Jonson that prevented his illustrious namesake from entertaining any misgiving as to the authorship in spite of the ante-

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cedents of the reputed author. The title-page of the Folio, in short, is the title-deed of Shakspere, and it would seem to justify his biographer in saying, that the Baconian Theory has no rational right whatever to a hearing.

But in the present state of the Shakespearian controversy discussion cannot be stopt by an *ipse dixit.* That the portrait of one man should be prefixed to the works of another is confessedly one of the strangest things in the history of letters. But here everything is strange. If Jonson represents the Figure of the Player as cut for gentle Shakespeare, we cannot forget that the gentle Shakespeare himself informs us in the *Sonnets* that Shakespeare was not his real name, but the noted weed in which he kept invention. If the editors of the Folio describe the plays as the work of their friend and fellow, the editor of *Troilus and Cressida* described them as the work of a concealed author, and as the property of grand possessors. And above all we cannot forget that if Shakspere is held out by those who were responsible for the publication of the Folio as the author of the plays, Shakspere himself, with no motive for concealment, and with every motive to assert his rights, never once during the five-and-twenty years that he lived in London claimed to be the author, and that during the last five years of his life he concerned himself as little with the Shakespearian Plays as the merest boor in Stratford.

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In connexion with the Figure another curious circumstance is to be mentioned. Numberless copies of the Folio must have perished in the lapse of time, but two hundred still exist, and in ninety per cent. of these the Figure is not printed. This would lead one to suspect that the Figure was not intended to be the figure-head when the Folio was launched. However this may be, no other explanation of the mystery has been suggested; and Mr. Lee tells us with all the emphasis of italics that of the two hundred existing copies of the Folio 'fewer than twenty are in a perfect state; that is, with the portrait *printed* (*not inlaid*) *on* the title-page, and the flyleaf facing it, with all the pages succeeding it, intact and uninjured' (p. 258).*

There is another aspect in which the Figure can be viewed. If it is assumed that Bacon was the author of the plays it must be admitted that he renounced the authorship and deliberately assigned it to the Player. Situated as he was in 1623 it might have been necessary for him to repudiate all connexion with the stage; and that some such necessity may have existed is evident

* In the copy of the Folio in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, the Flyleaf is a manuscript facsimile of print, the Figure is pasted upon the title-page, and the Dedication, the Address, and the Verses to the memory of the Author, are literally *inlaid* in the following pages by a species of typographical mosaic, the centre of the pages being cut away so as to leave a framework of paper, in which the documents are inserted.

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from the facts which he has himself disclosed. The Incomparable Pair of Brethren to whom the Folio was dedicated were his friends. He acknowledges the moderation and affection which Pembroke had displayed towards him in his misfortunes; he declares that Montgomery was the most honest of all the courtiers of James; and though he was socially and politically dead he solicits a continuance of their friendship, and their endeavours for the furtherance of his private life and fortune. In the dedication of the plays the writer, whoever he was, declares that the Brethren 'had prosequuted both them, and the Author living, with so much favour' that it both suggested and justified the dedication. Here Mr. Lee supplies us with fresh matter of surprise. He regards the dedication to Montgomery as a mere compliance with the passing vogue (p. 337), and he expresses his firm conviction that at no time, and in no manner, was Pembroke associated or acquainted with the Player.*

But, after all, the most astonishing thing in connexion with the Figure is Jonson's transformation of his Poet-ape into the gentle Shakspeare. In *Richard the Second* we are told of

> Perspectives, which rightly gaz'd upon
> Show nothing but confusion, ey'd awry,
> Distinguish form.

Jonson's description of the Figure would seem to

* This view is more or less confirmed by the fact that Pembroke was not appointed Lord Chamberlain till 1616, the year when Shakspere died, and five years after he had left the stage.

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be a similar perspective. The nature of the Player, if we may trust his contemporaries, was anything but gentle. Greene, in *The Groatsworth*, denounced him as a man with a 'tiger's heart'; the author of *Ratsei's Ghost* described him as one who 'fed on all men'; Jonson himself, in *The Poetaster*, complained of his 'saucy jests'; and even Mr. Lee describes him as inheriting his father's love of litigation, and as rigorous in insisting on his rights. As for his claims to be regarded as a man of gentle birth, Jonson, as we have seen, treated them with absolute derision.

The engraving and the bust in the chancel of Stratford church, Mr. Lee tells us, are the only counterfeit presentments of the Player that can be held indisputably to have been honestly designed to depict his features (p. 239). The round face and the eyes of the bust, he acknowledges, present a heavy, unintellectual expression (p. 234); and the expression of the engraving, though less heavy, is not more intellectual than that of the bust. Mr. Lee acknowledges that the Figure's expression of countenance is 'very crudely rendered,' and that it is 'neither distinctive nor lifelike,' and he remarks that Jonson's testimony to its excellence 'does no credit to his artistic discernment' (p. 235). But Jonson's artistic discernment was not at fault. Recognising its likeness to the Player he clearly discerned that an engraving so mean and insignificant as the Figure could not possibly pass as

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the portrait of a man of genius. Weak and insignificant as it is, Jonson intimates that it was a flattering likeness of Shakspere, and, adopting the language of *Venus and Adonis* in describing the painter of an ideal horse, he declares it to be a likeness

> Wherein the Graver had a strife
> With Nature to *outdo* the life.

Admitting, however, that the Graver had 'hit the face' of the Player, Jonson remarks that if he could have 'drawn his wit' with similar success, his wit would be found to answer to his face. In a poem on the Lady Venetia Digby, Jonson gives a picture of her body and then a picture of her mind, and he declares that 'To express her mind to sense Would ask a heaven's intelligence'; but when he comes to the picture of the mind of the reputed author of the greatest works of genius that the world has ever seen, all he has to say is this—

> The print would then surpass
> All that was ever writ in *brass*.*

Jonson could not have spoken more contemptuously of Pantalabus the Poet-ape. Dryden long ago declared that Jonson's verses were but a left-handed compliment at best; but viewed as perspectives they would appear to be intended not for compliment but for insult. In the verses to

* In the copy of the Folio of 1623 in the Library of Trinity College the word 'brass' is given in italics; and it is also given in italics in the College copy of the Folio of 1632.



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'The Author' Jonson writes that the poet must labour in his vocation,

Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn.

There the word *for* is used as *instead of*, and it is scarcely possible to avoid the suspicion that Jonson used the word in the same sense in his verses on 'The Figure' when he wrote that

It was for gentle Shakespears cut.

The verses to the memory of 'The Author' may be regarded as a memorial of all that Jonson really knew and thought about the Author of the Plays. But Jonson seems to write like one who was entrusted with a secret which he was bound to keep, but which he was longing to reveal. It is thus only that we can account for the vagaries of his style. In *The Poetaster* and the *Book of Epigrams*, when he speaks of his enemy the Player, his language is as plain as that of downright Shippen or of old Montaigne; but in his verses on 'The Figure,' in his verses to 'The Author,' and in his 'Discoveries,' whenever he approaches the Shakespearian question, he is as oracular, and as ambiguous, as the Delphic Priestess or the Spirit Asmath. Even in his ambiguities a distinction is to be remarked. In his lines on 'The Figure' his tone is that of veiled contempt; but in his verses to the memory of 'The Author' the tone is that of unbounded admiration.

The heading of the *Memorial Verses*, as they

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appear in the Folio, is printed and punctuated in a peculiar way:—

To the memory of my beloued,
The AVTHOR
MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:
AND
what he hath left vs.

In this heading every Shakespearian question of importance is suggested. Who was the 'beloved' of Jonson? Who was the man whom Jonson venerated as 'The Author'? Who, in Jonson's opinion, was 'Mr. William Shakespeare'? And what are the plays which 'he hath left us,' and which alone are to be regarded as Shakespearian? With *The Poetaster* and the *Book of Epigrams* before us we can scarcely look upon the Player as 'the beloved' of Jonson. In the face of the declaration that the Shakespearian plays were 'such that neither man nor muse could praise too much,' it is difficult to believe that Jonson regarded a mere Poet-ape and Parcel-poet as 'The Author.' And if we carefully study the language of the verses we shall find it to be so inapplicable to the Player that we can with difficulty suppose that Jonson regarded *him* as 'Mr. William Shakespeare.' Take, for instance, the opening lines:—

*To draw no envy* (Shakespeare) *on thy name,*
*Am I thus ample to thy Book, and Fame!*



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To attribute a book of plays to a great noble might bring odium, or, in the language of the day, draw envy, on his name; but how could it bring odium on the name of one who had been lying in his grave for upwards of seven years, whose name had been more or less associated with the plays for twenty-five, and whose association with the Book, instead of bringing odium on his name, would bring it into note? Instead of praising the Book Jonson would fain have praised the Author, but simple ignorance, he says, or blind affection, might indulge in personal panegyric,

> *Or crafty Malice might pretend this praise,*
> *And think to ruin where it seemed to raise.*

These words might with propriety be applied to some great personage whose social position would be ruined though his literary reputation might be raised by identifying him with the ignominies of the stage; but as for the Player, 'Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing could touch him further'—he was dead; and his reputation instead of being ruined would only have been raised by the public recognition of his right to be regarded as the author of the Book. Jonson continues:—

> *I, therefore, will begin. Soul of the Age!*
> *The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!*
> *My* Shakespeare *rise!*

This, certainly, was not the Shakespeare of the Players. *Their* Shakespeare could with no appearance of plausibility be described as the Soul of the

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Age in which he lived. He was not a great statesman who had influenced the fortunes of the state; he was not a great philosopher who had revolutionised the philosophy of the schools; at best he was nothing but a playwright at a time when plays were scarcely regarded as literature, and when players were banned and branded by the law. Jonson refuses to rank *his* Shakespeare with any of the great men of the past, for addressing him he says,

> *Thou art a Moniment, without a tomb,*
> *And art alive still,—*

words which could not possibly be applied to the dead Player; but, like the juggling fiend of Macbeth, Jonson again palters with us in a double sense, by adding,

> *while thy Book doth live,*
> *And we have wits to read, and praise to give.*

Recognising the lofty aims of Shakespeare Jonson speaks of 'his well-tornèd and true-filèd lines,'

> *In each of which he seems to shake a Lance,*
> *As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance,—*

an expression which might well be applied to the author who, in his own words, was devoted to the advancement of all learning and science, but could scarcely be applied to the man who, according to his biographers, had no literary design, and who allowed his daughter to be reared in such ignorance that she could not write her name.

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Jonson, it will be said, apostrophises Shakespeare as 'The Swan of Avon'; but even in this apostrophe he uses language which cannot with any propriety be applied to the man of Stratford:

> *Sweet Swan* of Avon! *what a sight it were*
> *To see thee in our waters yet appear,*
> *And make those flights upon the banks of* Thames,
> *That so did take* Eliza *and our* James!

If Shakspere was ever regarded as the Swan of Avon, he was in his grave; and though the song of the dying swan is a favourite fancy with the poets, no poet that ever lived would be mad enough to talk of a swan as *yet* appearing and resuming its flights upon the river some seven or eight years after it was dead. And, surely, Jonson must have regarded Shakespeare as still living when he exclaims:—

> *Shine forth, thou Star of* Poets, *and with rage,*
> *Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping Stage*
> *Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,*
> *And despairs day, but for thy Volume's light.*

Even the light of the Volume is obscured by the contradictions of the preliminary papers. While the two Players in their Address to 'The great Variety of Readers' rely on the unblotted papers which they had received as a proof of the 'easinesse' with which *their* Shakespeare wrote, Jonson in his Address to 'The Author' refers to his 'well-tornèd and true-filèd lines' as a proof

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of the patient labour which *his* Shakespeare bestowed upon his writings. The Shakespeare of Hemming and Condell is a mere happy-go-lucky improviser; but the Shakespeare of Jonson is a worker who 'sweated' over his work—a craftsman who 'struck the second heat upon the Muse's anvil'—an 'artist' who spared no labour on his art—a poet who was 'made as well as born.' This is not the Shakespeare of popular belief. The Shakespeare of Jonson is, in fact, the Shakespeare of Mr. Swinburne—the Shakespeare who recast *Hamlet*, who rewrote *Romeo and Juliet*, who renovated *Henry the Fifth*, who struck out the doggrel that disfigured *The Merry Wives*, and converted the raw rough sketch into the rich and ennobled version which we now possess; the Shakespeare, in fine, who in this respect had no counterpart among contemporary writers but the man whose literary habits Jonson knew so well—the great writer who, according to his own account, ever altered as he added, and who, according to his chaplain, revised his great philosophical work with such unwearied care, that year after year he altered and amended it, till at length he brought it to that state of perfection in which it was committed to the press.

Jonson died in 1637, and his *Discoveries* were first published in the second volume of his works which appeared in 1641. In this posthumous work there is the celebrated entry *De Shakspeare*

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*nostrat.** Having remarked that 'nothing is so preposterous as the running judgments upon poetry and poets,' and that 'the most favour common vices, out of a prerogative the vulgar have to lose their judgments, and like that which is naught,' he takes Hemming and Condell as an example of the exercise of this prerogative of the vulgar. 'I remember,' he says, 'the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand, which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted, and to justify mine own candour; for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any.'

Such is the famous entry, which is supposed to be decisive of the Shakespearian question. In reality it decides but little. When the Players

* In the ordinary editions the heading of the entry is *De Shakspeare nostrat*, which is unintelligible. In the edition in The Temple Classics, which professes to follow the original text of 1641, the entry stands as *De Shakespeare nostrati*; but why Jonson described Shakespeare as 'our fellow-countryman' is not apparent. Whoever Shakespeare was, he was an Englishman, and everybody must have known it. If a narrower interpretation is given to the word, Jonson was not born at Stratford and Shakspere was not born in London. In any case it is clear that Jonson is anxious to *specialise* the particular Shakespeare whom he had in view.

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mentioned that Shakespeare in his writing, whatsover he penned, never blotted out a line, they proved to demonstration that they knew nothing of the real Shakespeare; and when Jonson expressed the wish that he had blotted out a thousand, he cannot have forgotten his own description of the Shakespeare who sweated over his work, and struck the second heat upon the Muse's anvil. Jonson, it is true, regretted, as every sober student of Shakespeare must regret, that the incomparable writer who in his laborious revision of his work had blotted out so much had not blotted out still more. This was unintelligible to the Players. Hemming and Condell who, like Kempe and Burbage, must have been aware of the attempts of Shakspere to put Jonson down, very naturally regarded Jonson's remark as a malevolent speech. But it was not of the friend and fellow of the Players that Jonson was thinking when he wrote; he was thinking of the friend who had entrusted them with his papers and immortalised their names by associating them with the publication of his works. Nor was it the Pantalabus whom he had caused to be infamously sung throughout the city that Jonson was thinking of when he said, 'I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any.' He could not have written this of the Player without falsifying everything that he had written during the Player's lifetime; and we cannot

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conceive that Jonson in the seclusion of his closet was making secret atonement to the dead for the libels with which he had lampooned the living.

Nor are we driven to any such conclusion. Immediately following the entry, *De Shakspeare nostrati*, there is an entry entitled *Dominus Verulamius*, and, curiously enough, there is not a single thing which Jonson has said of Shakespeare in the first entry that he does not re-say of Bacon in the second. If he credits Shakespeare with 'an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions,' he describes Bacon as the chief of 'the great masters of wit and language' who had shed lustre on the age. If he declares that the wit of Shakespeare was in his own power, but the rule of it was not, he declares that the language of Bacon was nobly censorious, 'where he could spare or pass a jest.' If, he says of Shakespeare, 'I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any,' he says of Bacon, 'I reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself, in that he seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been in many ages.' In the *Memorial Verses* Jonson tells us that the great dramatist stood alone—

> Alone for the comparison
> Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come;

and if we wish to know who this miracle of genius

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really was, Jonson, in his *Discoveries*, tells us. He tells us that 'he that hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue, which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome,' was Bacon.

A final consideration will show how little Jonson is to be relied on as attesting the responsibility of the Stratford Player for the works which were associated with his name. In his famous common-place book he gives a Catalogue of Writers—*Scriptorum Catalogus*—a beadroll of all 'the great masters of wit and language' among his contemporaries, 'in whom all vigour of invention, and strength of judgment met'; and he awards the palm to Bacon. 'Within his view,' he says, 'and about his time, were all the wits born that could honour a language, or help study,' and the greatest of these, in Jonson's opinion, was his patron. When Jonson wrote, his illustrious friend was dead; and 'now,' he says, 'things daily fall; wits grow downward, and eloquence grows backward; so that he may be named and stand as the mark and ἀκμή of our language.' In this catalogue of writers Shakspere is not mentioned; among the wits born in Bacon's time he is ignored; and though Jonson attributes such transcendent excellence to the Shakespearian Plays, that neither man nor muse could praise them too much, he does not select *them* as the mark and acmè of our language—unless, indeed, he viewed them as the work of Bacon.

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## vii

### *Of Shakespeare as a Lawyer*

A CLOUD of mystery overhangs and overshadows much of the career of Bacon. Born on the 22nd of January 1561, he was three years older than the man who disputes his claim to the primacy in the world of thought; and in almost every respect he presents a contrast to his rival. The son of a Lord Keeper, and the nephew of a Lord Treasurer, he had, from his very childhood, attracted the notice of the Virgin Queen; and the fates, to use the metaphor of Jonson, would seem to have spun the thread of his existence,

> Round and full,
> Out of their choicest and their whitest wool.

Sent to the University when yet a boy, he spent three years of his early life at Cambridge. Removed from Cambridge, when little more than sixteen, he spent the next three years, to use his own expression, in the train of an Ambassador to France.

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When he was nineteen his father died, and died so suddenly that he made no provision for his favourite son. Compelled to adopt a profession, he entered himself as a student at Gray's Inn, and was called to the bar, when he became of age, in 1582. Lord Macaulay, in his famous Essay, states that he rose rapidly into business; but this is a mistake. In 1593, twelve years after his call, no solicitor, as Mr. Spedding tells us, was found resorting to his chambers. In 1594 he himself writes to Burghley, 'I see the bar will be my bier.' In 1595 he writes to Essex that he was 'purposed not to follow the practice of the law.' As late as 1603 he writes to Cecil that he had placed all his ambition on his pen. The depression of his early life is attributed by Macaulay to the jealousy of Burghley and his son, and it is possible that he suffered from the contempt with which men of affairs in high places are apt to look down on men of genius. But it must not be forgotten that Bacon owed his first seat in Parliament to the influence of Burghley; and when he sought the office of Solicitor-General in 1594 Essex wrote him a letter describing an interview with the Queen, in which 'she said that none thought you fit for the place but my Lord Treasurer and myself.' The fact is, that Bacon could not be depended on as a politician. By a strange waywardness he joined the party of Essex, which was in opposition to the party of the Cecils. Like Cicero and Burke he loved the society of the young,

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and he was fascinated by the brilliant qualities of Essex and the youthful graces of Southampton.* He became the confidential adviser of the one, and the ardent admirer of the other. From 1590 to 1599 nothing could exceed his devotion to his two friends. In 1599, the prime mystery of his life begins, and he is found with those who were hunting them to death. In a succession of 'Letters of Advice,' presenting every consideration which could influence an ardent and ambitious mind, he had earnestly recommended his friend to undertake the government of Ireland; and Essex had acted on his advice.† The enterprise was an ignominious failure. Essex, who left London in March 1599, returned in the following August, to the high displeasure of the Queen. The unfortunate young nobleman accepted the dedication of a pamphlet containing 'a story of the first year of King Henry the Fourth,' which the Queen regarded as a 'seditious prelude'; and Bacon was compelled to appear against his friend before the Council. 'The play of deposing King Richard the Second' was acted at the Globe, on the requisition of the Earl, on the afternoon before he broke into rebellion; and Bacon was compelled to appear before the Lords and denounce the performance as an act of treason.

* Bacon was born in 1561; Essex in 1567; and Southampton in 1573.

† Bacon's *Letters of Apology* to Devonshire in 1604 is utterly at variance with the *Letters of Advice* to Essex in 1567, 1568, and 1569. On this contradiction see note H.

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The Earl was executed in the Tower, and, by the command of the Queen, Bacon wrote the Declaration of his Treasons, which, after the lapse of three centuries, we cannot read without feelings of indignation and disgust. His worshippers have insisted that Bacon acted from a high sense of duty in hounding his benefactor to his fate, and devoting his memory to execration. Others have attributed his action to ambition. But if we may trust the letter which Bacon wrote to Southampton shortly after the Queen's death, he would seem in these dark transactions to have acted on compulsion. 'How little it may seem credible to you at first,' he writes, 'yet it is as true as a thing that God knoweth that this great change hath wrought in me no other change towards your Lordship than this, that I may safely be that to you now, which I was truly before.' How Bacon's safety had been comprised we can but guess. If, as Lord Macaulay thinks, he acted from a regard to his selfish interests as a lawyer he was doomed to disappointment. In spite of his want of practice, and in spite of his alleged ignorance of law, he had been compelled to act with Coke, his malignant enemy, and with Fleming, his successful rival, on the trial of his dearest friends; and on the trial he had given conspicuous proof of his ability as an advocate and his learning as a lawyer. But the State Trials were scarcely over when Coke insulted him in open court, forbade him to meddle in the business of the Queen,

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and threatened 'to clap *cap. utlegatum* on his back.'*

On the death of Elizabeth on the 24th of March 1603 Bacon was compelled to reconsider his position. Though he had placed his ambition on his pen, his heart was still fixed on the vulgar objects of ambition. The truth is his spirit, like that of another famous man, was

> Antithetically mixt,—
> One moment of the mightiest, and again,
> On little objects with like firmness fixt.

He affected to rejoice that the days of canvassing were over, and he canvassed with the best. He wrote to Northumberland offering to draw a proclamation for the King; he wrote to Southampton soliciting a renewal of his friendship; and he wrote to Mountjoy, who had recently been created the Earl of Devonshire, the Letter of Apology in which he ignored his Letters of Advice, and tried to justify himself with regard to Essex. He sent Matthew to promote his interest at the Scottish

* As this expression has been made the basis of much ingenious speculation, it may be well to consider its legal import. *Utlegatus* is defined by Coke as *extra legem positus*. In the old law, no one could be outlawed but for *felony*; in Bracton's time the penalty was extended to what he calls *delicta*; and subseqently by various statutes process of outlawry was made to lie in account, debt, detinue, annuity, covenant, and all *actions on the case* (Co. Litt. 128*b*). What 'the old scent' was on which the Attorney-General hunted we cannot safely guess.

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Court. He entreated Davies, who was in Scotland at the time, 'to be good to all concealed poets.' He made interest with everyone in Scotland who was likely to be employed in the affairs of England. No place-hunter could have been keener in his hunt for place. But his efforts were in vain. He was knighted; he was made a King's Counsel; but he was doomed to wait. It was not till the 25th of June 1607, when he was in his forty-seventh year, that he was made Solicitor-General, and attained a recognised position at the bar.

In 1607 more than twenty-five years had elapsed since he was called. During that period he was not in practice, and, as he said, he had placed his ambition on his pen. How was the pen of this restless and energetic genius employed during this period of hope abandoned or deferred? It has been said that while he was yet a boy at Cambridge he meditated the overthrow of the Aristotelian Philosophy; but this is mere Baconian myth. His earliest philosophical work, a fragment on the Interpretation of Nature entitled *Valerius Terminus*, was not published till 1603; his first important work, the *Advancement of Learning*, did not appear till 1605; the *Cogitata et Visa* of 1607, and *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, which appeared in 1609, were merely fragments which were afterwards incorporated in his great work; and the *Novum Organum*, the first instalment of the Great Instauration, did not appear till 1620. If we take into



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account first attempts, variations, repetitions, and translations into Latin, the whole of the philosophical works of Bacon might easily be comprised in a couple of octavo volumes.

The philosophical works, it is evident, were not sufficient to find employment for a pen such as that of Bacon during a period of five-and-twenty years of obscuration. Of works which 'came home to men's business and bosoms,' Bacon, up to January 1597, had published none in his own home except a fragment of *The Colours of Good and Evil* which he dedicated to Mountjoy, and the ten short *Essays* which he dedicated to his brother. It is true, he had been engaged in the production of a number of semi-theatrical Devices. He designed the 'Dumb-show' of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which was played before the Queen in 1589. In 1592 he composed what Mr. Spedding calls 'A Conference of Pleasure' which contains the germ of *Julius Caesar*. In 1594 he contributed the speeches of the Six Counsellors to 'The Masque of the Order of the Helmet' which was performed contemporaneously with *The Comedy of Errors*. He composed or assisted in composing 'The Device of the Indian Prince,' which contains much that is suggestive of passages in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He composed 'The Device of Philautia' for Essex, at which Southampton tilted and Tobie Matthew played the part of Squire. When Solicitor-General he was the chief contriver

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of 'The Marriage of the Rhine and Thames,' which celebrated the nuptials of the daughter of the King. When Attorney-General he rivalled the magnificence of Wolsey in the preparation of 'The Masque of Flowers,' which celebrated the marriage of Somerset and Lady Essex. As Lord Chancellor he patronised, if he did not assist in the production of the 'Masque of Mountebanks,' which was produced in his honour by the members of his Inn. The student of the Shakespearian drama will not fail to note how constantly the dramatist in this respect follows the example of the lawyer. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in *Hamlet*, in *Timon*, in *Cymbeline*, in *The Winter's Tale*, in *The Tempest*, and in *Henry the Eighth* we have Masques, and Dumbshows, and Devices introduced for the most part without any dramatic necessity or any artistic purpose. And it is curious to observe how implicitly these toys, as Bacon would call them, follow the directions of the Essay of *Masques and Triumphs*, and how exactly the characters correspond with the Fools, the Satyrs, the Wild Men, the Ethiops, the Nymphs, the Rustics, the Cupids, and the Spirits, that Bacon, with characteristic effusion, has enumerated in the Essay.

During the whole of his career Bacon had relations more or less intimate with the stage. As the bosom friend of Southampton he must frequently have conversed with him about the Shakespeare of



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the Sonnets and the Poems. As a Bencher of Gray's Inn, if not as the Conjuror who had foisted on the Inn the company by which *The Comedy of Errors* was performed, he must have been thrown into personal contact with Burbage, Kempe, and Shakspere. As counsel on the trial of the Earls he must have been aware of the circumstances under which *Richard the Second* was performed by the company of which Shakspere was a member as detailed in the deposition of Augustine Philipps.* As the most assiduous of courtiers he must have assisted at the Court performances of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* and the other Shakespearian Plays for which payments were made by the officials of the Court to Hemming. When he was Solicitor-General his 'countenance and loving affection' were gratefully recognised by Beaumont. As Lord Keeper he procured a Masque to be written for the Christmas Revels of his Inn by Jonson. His last public act as Chancellor was to preside at a dinner given in honour of Alleyne. His writings abound in allusions to the stage which show how thoroughly familiar he was with all the details of the drama, and the only thing that is remarkable is the studied silence which he maintains as to any personal knowledge of the playwrights or the players of his time.

In or about 1594 Bacon compiled a common-

*It is to be remarked that in the schedule of evidence appended to the *Declaration* Bacon omits this deposition which is given by Mr. Phillipps in his *Outlines* (ii. 360).

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place book which has recently been published by Mrs. Pott under the name of *Promus*, and the genuineness of which is admitted by Mr. Spedding. The book has been ransacked for parallelisms to the plays. Many of these parallelisms are far-fetched and hardly worth the carriage; but some of them undoubtedly are striking. The book, if we may judge by its entries, shows the profound study of the works of Ovid which is conspicuous in the Shakespearian *Poems*. It contains a collection of French, Italian, and Spanish Proverbs such as those which are cited in *Love's Labour's Lost*. There are entries which contain expressions so similar to those employed in *Romeo and Juliet* that it has been matter of dispute whether the play was indebted to the commonplace-book, or whether the commonplace-book was indebted to the play. What particularly strikes one, however, is the care with which Bacon compiled what he called the 'Formularies and Elegances' of expression and the 'Continuances' of discourse, not for the purposes of his philosophical works, but apparently for the purposes of the dramatic writings.*

We have a number of scattered intimations that during the period in which Bacon was comparatively lost to view, he was a votary of the Muses. In 1594 he writes to Essex that he is drinking the waters of Parnassus. In 1603 he solicits the

* On the *Promus* of Bacon see Note F.

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assistance of Davis, and desires him 'to be good to concealed poets.' In 1604 he states to Devonshire that, though he did not 'profess to be a poet,' he had upon occasion indited a sonnet to the Queen. It is objected that his translation of the Psalms is a proof that he was incapable of the higher flights of poetry; but the translation, written as it was in age and sickness, is at least as good as that of Milton, and is neither better nor worse than much that passes for poetry when attributed to Shakespeare. Bacon's contemporaries undoubtedly considered him to be a poet. Wotton attributes to him verses the plaintive melody of which is recognised by Mr. Spedding. The Continuator of Stow includes him among the 'modern and excellent poets' of the time. Withers, in his *Great Assizes*, makes him the Chancellor of Parnassus. Jonson, in his *Discoveries*, applies to him the words which in his Folio verses he had applied to the great dramatist, and describes him as one who had filled up all numbers and was to be preferred to all the dramatic writers that had been produced either by 'insolent Greece or haughty Rome.' And, finally, Sir Tobie Matthew, in words which Mr. Coleridge might have used of Shakespeare, describes him as 'a man so rare in knowledge of so many several kinds, endued with the facility and felicity of expressing it all in so eloquent, so significant, so abundant, and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors,

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of allusions, as perhaps the world hath not seen since it was a world.'

Matthew was the literary confidant of Bacon and his 'inquisitor' of style. In a letter to Gondomar, Bacon describes him as his *alter ego*; and the relations between them were so intimate that the evidence of Matthew, as reflecting light on the Shakespearian Question, deserves more attention than it has hitherto received. He was the son of an eminent ecclesiastic who was successively Dean of Christchurch, Bishop of Durham, and Metropolitan of York. He was born in 1578, and from his earliest youth he seems to have attracted the regard of Bacon. In 1595 he played the part of the Squire in the Device which Bacon had composed for Essex. In 1603 Bacon sent him on a mission to promote his interest at the Scottish Court. In 1605, to Bacon's regret, he had become reconciled to the Church of Rome, and, owing to the feeling roused by the Gunpowder Plot, he was first 'imprisoned for religion,' as he says, and then banished from the country. From 1605 to 1617 he lived upon the continent; but during the whole time he maintained a constant correspondence with his friend and patron. In July 1617, by the influence of Bacon, who was Attorney-General at the time, he was permitted to return to England; but in October 1618, having given fresh offence to the Court, he was again compelled to leave the country. During his exile he lived for a time in

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Spain, and when the idea of the Spanish Match was broached it was thought that Matthew might be of use in promoting the wishes of the King, and accordingly he was recalled to England. The date of his recall may be approximately fixed by a curious circumstance, which shows how intimate were the relations which subsisted between him and Bacon. In his answer to the fourteenth article of the charges of corruption brought against him by the Commons, the Chancellor confesses that he received five hundred pounds from one Sir Ralph Hansbye, a suitor in his court, and, he adds, 'the said five hundred pounds was delivered to me by Mr. Tobie Matthew.' Matthew therefore must have returned to England before 1621, the date of Bacon's fall. From a letter of Meautys to Bacon we know by the date that Matthew was at York House on the 7th of January 1621; and from a letter of Bacon to Buckingham we know that he was still in London on the 18th of April 1623. Towards the end of that month, Matthew left London for Madrid, where he remained till the following October. On the 6th of October 1623 he returned to England with the Prince; and on the 10th, in recognition of his services in Spain, he was knighted by the king at Royston.

The dates which have been mentioned are important. Bacon was in the habit of presenting Matthew with copies of his works as they issued from the press; and in an undated letter Matthew writes to

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his patron, 'I have received your great and noble token and favour of the 9th of April, and can but return the humblest of my thanks for your Lordship's vouchsafing so to visit this poorest and unworthiest of your servants.' As the letter is addressed to the Lord Viscount St. Alban, it must have been written after the 27th of January 1621, which was the date of Bacon's patent, and the only other indication of the date is the mention of the 9th of April. On the 9th of April 1621 Bacon was in the agony of his impeachment, and on the 9th of April 1626 he died. Those years, therefore, must be excluded from consideration. The *Novum Organum* appeared in 1620; the History of *Henry the Seventh* in 1622; the *De Augmentis* and two instalments of the *Historia Naturalis* in 1623; the final edition of the *Essays* in 1625; and the *Sylva Sylvarum* in 1627, when Bacon was no longer living. What, then, was the great and noble token, the receipt of which is acknowledged by Matthew? It is difficult to say, and it is immaterial to guess. The importance of his letter lies in the postscript, and in the fact that Matthew was in England when he wrote it. 'The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea,' he says, 'is of your Lordship's name, though he be known by another.'

The *De Augmentis* was published in October 1623, and the Shakespeare Folio was registered on the 8th of the following November. Neither of

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these, therefore, unless indeed it was an advance copy, could have been presented to Matthew on the 9th of April 1623. The Baconians, nevertheless, insist that the great and noble token was the Shakespeare Folio. Mr. Lee, who regards the Baconians as insane, contends that 'according to the only sane interpretation of Matthew's words, his most prodigious wit was some Englishman named Bacon whom he met abroad; probably a pseudonymous Jesuit, like most of Matthew's friends' (p. 308). As if in acknowledging the receipt of a great and noble token from the most illustrious Englishman of his time, Matthew, like the slave in the triumphal car of the Roman, would whisper in his ear that, for all his great and noble tokens, he need not fancy that *he* was the most prodigious wit that England had produced, for the most prodigious English wit was a pseudonymous Jesuit, whose name happened to be Bacon. This surely is not a *sane* interpretation of the words of Matthew; but, whether it is sane or insane, it does not determine the question in debate. In Bacon's correspondence there is an undated letter of the Lord St. Alban to Mr. Matthew, which is the complement of the undated letter of Mr. Matthew to the Lord St. Alban. The letter must have been written after the 27th of January 1621, which was the date of Bacon's viscounty, and before the 10th of October 1623, which was the date of Matthew's knighthood. As Bacon requests Matthew 'to bring his friendly aid

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before night,' Matthew must have been in London; and as the matter on which Bacon required his aid was connected with some transaction, as to which Bacon's memory was at fault, we may conclude that the transaction was of ancient standing, and therefore previous to Matthew's imprisonment and exile. What is important, however, is not the transaction itself but the reason which Bacon assigns for his forgetting it. 'I may the worse put things upon the account of my own memory,' he says, 'my head being then wholly employed about Invention.'

The word *Invention*, in the language of the Elizabethan Poets, was a term of art appropriated to Poetry and the Drama. Greene, in his *Groatsworth*, speaks of the 'admired Inventions' of Peele and Marlowe. Jonson, in his Ode to the Earl of Desmond, exclaims,

> Arise Invention!
> Awake and put on the wings of Pindar's Muse!

Spenser, in *Colin Clout*, addresses a Poet

> Whose Muse, full of high thought's Invention,
> Doth like himself heroically sound.

It is in this sense that the author of the Shakespearian plays employs the word when he thinks of the glories of Agincourt:

> O for a Muse of Fire, that would ascend
> The highest heaven of Invention!

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It is in this sense that the author of the Shakespearian poems uses the word when he dedicates 'the first heir of his Invention' to his friend. And it is in this sense that the author of the Shakespearian Sonnets asks (*S.* 76)—

> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep Invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth and where they did proceed?

If anyone requires an explanation of the phrase 'a noted weed' it is supplied by Bacon, who, in his *Henry the Seventh*, tells us that when Perkin Warbeck took sanctuary his principal adviser 'clad himself like a hermit, and in that *weed* wandered about the country.' Here then we have a pencil of luminous rays converging to a focal point. Bacon admits that in or before 1605 his head was wholly employed about Invention; the author of the Sonnets confesses that he kept Invention in a noted weed; and Bacon's literary confidant declares that the most prodigious wit he ever knew of, this side of the sea, was of Bacon's name though he was known by another. The author of the Sonnets, admittedly, was the author of the Poems and the Plays, and the whole Shakespearian question would seem to resolve itself into the question, who was the author of the Sonnets?

A negative answer to this question is inevitably suggested. The author could not have been Shakspere. If *he* kept Invention he did not keep

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it in a noted weed. He had no reason to conceal his name. His name was as well known as that of Kempe or Burbage. It was familiar to the shouting varletry before whom he acted; it was familiar to the gallants with whom he drank; it was familiar to the whole theatrical world of which he claimed to be the chief. In short, from the days when Greene denounced him as an 'upstart crow' to the days when Jonson denounced him as a 'Poet-ape,' his name was as well known to the world as it was in the old livery-stable days when his understrappers shouted 'I am one of Shakspere's boys.'

Indeed, if we reflect, we shall find it difficult to conceive how the Player could ever have been considered to be the author of the *Sonnets*. According to Mr. Lee, the verses are arrayed in the gorgeous livery of Petrarch, and Ronsard, and Desportes, and De Baïf (p. 92). According to Mr. Wyndham they display a knowledge of the technicalities of the law (p. cxxxiv); they show a familiarity with all the philosophy of the time (p. cxxii), and they prove that the author was a profound student of the eternal processes of nature (*ibid.*). These 'sugared sonnets' were the *poetica mella* of the age. How, then, can we believe that compositions of such transcendent merit were the work of an uneducated young fellow from a bookless neighbourhood, who up to the age of twenty-four was destitute of polished accomplishments and unversed in the arts of com-

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position? And when we remember the extreme social distinctions of the age we cannot help asking how the horseboy of 1590 could so suddenly have emerged from the purlieus of the stable to the precincts of the court; how the servitor of 1591 could have become the companion of nobles; how the Johannes Factotum of 1592 could have been the rival of a great noble for the favours of a great lady; how one of Burbage's deserving men could have ventured to reproach a peer of the realm with his 'sensual faults' (*S.* 35), when a knight could be haled before the Star Chamber for addressing a peer as 'good man, Morley,' and when men like Jonson and Chapman could be committed to the Fleet for a passing jest upon the King's countrymen, the Scots. The sonnets, addressed as they were to a great noble, and dealing with the most delicate affairs, could scarcely have been circulated 'among the private friends' of a mere Player. It has been said that the author of the sonnets lamented that he was compelled to make a 'motley' of himself (*S.* cx), and that his name had in consequence received 'a brand' (*S.* cxi). But it is difficult to conceive how the successful Player could have felt degraded by a profession which had rescued him from abject poverty, which had released him from mean employments, which had raised him to a position of wealth and independence, and which he had continued to pursue for years after he had become rich and independent.

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Who, then, was the author of the *Sonnets*? The answer to this question will be found to depend on the answer to another—Who was the personage to whom the sonnets were addressed? This embarks us on a 'still vexed Bermoothes' of debate. The opening sequence of the sonnets, to adopt the words of Mr. Lee, is addressed to a youth of rank and beauty who is admonished to marry and beget a son (p. 113). According to Mr. Lee this youth was the Earl of Southampton, while according to Mr. Wyndham he was the Lord Herbert who subsequently became the Earl of Pembroke. Each of them was young; each of them was noble; each of them was notorious for his gallantries; and each of them had the honour of being offered a granddaughter of the Lord Treasurer in marriage. Southampton was born on the 6th of October 1573, and Herbert was born on the 9th of April 1580. If, then, with Mr. Lee we accept the spring of 1593 and the autumn of 1594 as the dates of the earlier sonnets (p. 73), Herbert, who was then only thirteen or fourteen years of age, could scarcely have been the youth of rank and beauty who was exhorted to marry and beget a son. If, on the other hand, we adopt the view of Mr. Wyndham and assign to the earliest group of the sonnets 'a date before, but not long before, 1599' (p. 250), then the Lady Bridget Vere, who was offered to Herbert in 1597, was only thirteen years of age, and could scarcely have been the 'maiden garden' who was

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to supply the happy gardener with 'living flowers.' Herbert was talked of as a suitor for the daughter of the Earl of Nottingham in 1599, but the negotiations came to nothing (p. xxxviii). In 1604 the young Lord, who in 1601 had become the Earl of Pembroke, was married to the Lady Mary Talbot, a daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, but confessedly this marriage was too late to form the theme of the opening sequence.

Neither Herbert nor Southampton answers to the descriptions of 'Mr. W. H.' who in the dedication of the edition of 1609 is said to have been 'the only begetter' of the sonnets. But every indication points to the conclusion that Southampton was the youth of rank and beauty who has been immortalised by Shakespeare. It was to Southampton that Shakespeare dedicated 'the first heir of his Invention'; it was to Southampton that Shakespeare declared 'what I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours'; and we cannot avoid the conclusion that as the Poems were dedicated, so the sonnets were addressed, by Shakespeare to Southampton.

Who, then, was the author of the *Sonnets*? By showing that they were addressed to Southampton Mr. Lee has unconsciously suggested reasons for believing that they were addressed to him by Bacon. Southampton was the ward of Bacon's uncle (p. 311); he was a member of Bacon's Inn (p. 312); he was one of Bacon's set (*ibid.*); he tilted in the

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Device which Bacon had prepared for Essex(p. 313); and till the miserable fiasco of 1601 he was the bosom friend of Bacon. When, therefore, in 1590, Bacon's uncle offered the young noble his granddaughter, the Lady Elizabeth Vere, in marriage, it may well be that Burghley's nephew, who was then twenty-nine years of age, was the sonneteer who exhorted his friend to perpetuate his beauty and his name. Bacon was no stranger to the sonneteering art. We have his own testimony that, though he did not profess to be a poet, he had upon occasion indited a sonnet to the Queen. In his Device of the Indian Prince there is a canzonet describing the Queen of 'a land seated between the Old World and the New,' which is cast in the mould of the Shakespearian sonnets, and which anticipates the description of 'the fair Vestal thronèd by the West' in one of the most charming of the Shakespearian plays. He possessed all the qualifications that could entitle him to be regarded as the author. During his residence in France he had ample opportunity of studying Ronsard, and Desportes, and De Baïf; and as he satisfies the requirements of Mr. Lee, so he satisfies the requirements of Mr. Wyndham. He was acquainted with the technicalities of the law; he was familiar with all the philosophy of his time; he was a student of the eternal processes of nature; and in eloquent discourse and sheer beauty of diction he was unsurpassed.



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Mr. Lee admits that, amid the borrowed conceits and poetic figures of Shakespeare's Sonnets, there lurk suggestive references to the circumstances of his external life that attended their composition (p. 102). Such was the opinion of Wordsworth, and such was the opinion of Mr. Hallam, to say nothing of the other authorities enumerated by Mr. Wyndham (p. lxxvii). Inapplicable as these references are to any circumstances in the external life of the young man from Stratford, they are singularly applicable to circumstances in the life of Bacon. His correspondence during the period covered by the Sonnets shows that he was disgusted with the bar and despaired of advancement in the state; that he thought himself exposed to 'the most exquisite disgrace'; that his 'name had been subjected to envy, and his life to a ruffian's violence'; that he had 'placed his ambition on his pen'; and, as he subsequently wrote, his head was at one time 'wholly occupied about Invention.' All this is reflected in the Sonnets, in which he 'unlocked his heart,' and confided his sorrows to his friend. He complains that he was 'barred of public honours' (*S.* 25); that he was 'in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes' (*S.* 29); that he was in danger of becoming 'the coward conquest of a wretch's knife' (*S.* 74); that he 'kept Invention in a noted weed' (*S.* 76); and that in spite of all his efforts at concealment his 'name received a brand' (*S.* 111). In fact, the life of Bacon is reflected in

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the Sonnets; and in the transparent clearness of the Poet's verse everything floats double, swan and shadow, on the lake.

Even the philosophy of Bacon is reflected. Mr. Wyndham describes the author of the Sonnets as a student of the eternal processes of nature. In his *Natural History*, Bacon lays it down that the eternal processes of nature are regulated by 'the spirits or pneumaticals that are in all tangible bodies' (s. 98); and, in his 'Experiments in consort touching Venus' he attributes the ill consequences of excess in 'the use of Venus' to 'the expense of spirits' by which it is attended (s. 693). A most peculiar, not to say, a most fantastic, theory! Bacon says it was 'scarce known'; but it was as well known to Shakespeare as it was to Bacon, and, in the very words of the *Natural History*, he declares that

> The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action (*S.* 129).

The author of the *Sonnets* complains that his speech bewrayed him, and that every word he uttered almost told his name. In one remarkable instance, in spite of all his precautions, his name is actually told. Bacon had a number of words which may almost be considered catch-words. In his *Henry the Seventh* he remarks that the king chose to advance clergymen and lawyers as being more 'obsequious' than his nobles. He recommends Essex to adopt a policy of 'obsequious kindness'



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towards the Queen. He advises Buckingham to be 'obsequious' to James. When soliciting the King for the Chancellorship in February 1615 'he presents his Majesty with *gloria in obsequio*,' and he 'makes oblation' to his Majesty of his heart, his service, and his place. This word 'oblation' is another of his catch-words. He makes 'his poor oblation of a garment' to the Queen; he dedicates his first important work as 'some oblation' to the King; he repeatedly 'makes oblation of himself' to James. And the author of the *Sonnets* addresses his 'better angel' in words which Bacon might have addressed to Elizabeth:—

> No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
> And take thou my oblation, poor but free.

If the deserving man of Burbage had been the author of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, all of which had been written and performed before 1593, *he* at all events would not have described *Venus and Adonis* as 'the first heir of his invention.' The nephew of Burghley, on the other hand, might risk the publication of a poem where he would not venture to own that he was the author of a play; and if he was in reality the author of the Poems he would naturally describe the first and the most popular of them, as the first heir of *his* invention. In the Poems as in the Sonnets, we have a reflection of the life of Bacon. His *Promus* shows

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how diligently he was studying the works of Ovid, to which the author of the Poems was indebted for his material and his motto. Disgusted with the bar, and despairing of advancement in the state, Bacon, who for the time had placed his ambition on his pen, might well have adopted as his motto the words of the *Amores* :—

> Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
> Pocula Castaliâ plena ministret aquâ.

And it is at least a coincidence, that at the very time that the poet tells Southampton that he is indulging in copious draughts from the Castalian fount, the lawyer writes to Essex that he is drinking the waters of Parnassus.

Every criticism on Shakespeare as the author of the Poems may be applied to Bacon. Mr. Coleridge describes the poet as 'a philosopher gazing on the movements of the goddess and the boy with observation as calm and passionless as if he belonged to another planet' (p. 223). Mr. Coleridge could not more felicitously have described the mental attitude of the philosopher who conceived the *Instauratio Magna*. Professor Dowden points out the anxiety of the poet to preserve 'a peculiarly pregnant and rich relation with the actual world,' and his determination to adhere to 'the evidence of objective facts' (p. 53). Bacon could not have been more anxious to adhere to the evidence of objective facts when compiling the

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Centuries of his *Natural History*. The Poems sparkle with a frosty brilliance which led Mr. Hazlitt to compare them to palaces of ice. This 'frosty brilliance,' according to Professor Dowden, is the light with which the *Ethical Writings* of Bacon gleam, and which plays over the worldly maxims which constitute his philosophy of life (p. 18). Finally, the accomplished Shakespearian scholar observes that the poems abound with 'endless exercises and variations' on such themes as Beauty, Lust, and Death, as Night, Opportunity, and Time (pp. 50, 51). In reality they are Essays of the philosopher in verse, and even Love is treated in the Poems exactly as he treats it in the *Essays*.

If anything is certain in regard to the Sonnets, the Poems, and the Plays, it is certain that the author was a Lawyer. In the *Sonnets* the references to the law are so forced and so unnatural that were it not for our reverence of the author they would be deemed to be grotesque. In the 46th Sonnet, for instance, the eye and the heart of the poet are represented as at issue on their respective rights over the mistress, or the master-mistress, of the poet's passion; a suit is instituted as the result; the plaintiff and the defendant 'plead'; 'a quest of thoughts' is 'impanelled' to 'decide the title'; and the 'moiety' of each is 'determined' by the 'verdict,' which finds that the eye is entitled to the 'outward part' and the heart to the 'inward love.' In the 134th Sonnet the poet represents

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himself as 'mortgaged' to his mistress; his friend stands 'surety' to secure the payment of the debt; the lady, like a usurer, insists on 'the statute of her beauty'; the friend 'pays the whole,' and yet the principal debtor 'is not free.' These certainly are not the wood notes wild of a rustic poet; still less are they the voice of nature; they are not even the warblings of a lawyer's clerk. In the *Poems* the Queen of Love proposes to 'sell herself' to the young Adonis; the consideration is to be 'a thousand kisses,' the number to be doubled in default of immediate payment; the deed is to be executed without delay; and the purchaser is to 'set his sign-manual on her wax-red lips.' The Roman Matron in her agony of shame makes the 'abridgment of a will' in which she bequeaths her 'resolution' to her husband, her 'honour' to the knife, her 'shame' to Tarquin, and her 'fame' to those who still believed in her purity; and Collatinus is to 'oversee' the will. In the *Plays* every one of the characters talks law. Greek and Trojan, Roman and Syracusan, Ancient Briton and Scandinavian, Venetian and Illyrian, Lord and Lady, all discourse the jargon of the English courts. In *Troilus and Cressida* Pandarus talks of 'a kiss in fee-farm,' Thersites of 'the fee-simple of the tetter,' Troilus of 'perfection in reversion,' and the pre-contract which serves Cressida for a marriage concludes with the formula, 'In witness whereof the parties interchangeably,' of the draftsman. In

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*Antony and Cleopatra* the Roman Triumvir distinguishes between title by purchase and title by descent. In *The Merchant of Venice* Antonio settles the property of the Jew in so lawyerlike a manner that Mr. Lewin, in his Treatise on Trusts, cites his language in illustration of a 'use.' In *As You Like It* the Duke orders his officers to make an 'extent.' In *Lear* the deluded Gloster proposes to make his bastard 'capable.' In *King John* the law of adulterine bastardy is laid down with the precision of a text-book. In *Henry the Fifth* the Archbishop of Canterbury delivers a lecture on the Law Salique. In *Henry the Sixth* Somerset discusses the legal effect of an 'attainder.' In *Henry the Eighth* Suffolk cites the very words of the statute when he charges Wolsey with having brought himself 'into the compass of a præmunire.' In *Hamlet* the Prince of Denmark talks of statutes, recognisances, fines and recoveries, and double vouchers, as glibly as if he was fresh from reading Bacon's Law Tracts; and the very gravediggers discuss the point of a case of felo-de-se which is only to be found in the Reports of Plowden. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the French Maid of Honour refuses to make her lips a 'common of pasture'; in *As You Like It* Rosalind talks of 'dying by attorney'; in *The Merchant of Venice* Portia proposes to be 'charged on interrogatories'; and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Mrs. Page, speaking of the fat knight, says, 'if the devil have him not

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in fee-simple, with fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.' The practice of the courts was as familiar to the Dramatist as the theory of the law. In *The Comedy of Errors* we have a circumstantial account of an arrest on mesne process in an action on the case, effected on a merchant, in the streets of Ephesus. And if we care to see how the noblest poetry can be marred when the poet turns pedant we have only to read the dying speech of Romeo :—

> Eyes look your last!
> Arms take your last embrace! And lips, O you
> The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
> A dateless bargain to engrossing death!

All Shakespeare's characters talk law; and Lord Campbell testifies that 'to Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounds it, there can neither be demurrer, nor bill of exception, nor writ of error.'

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## VIII

### *Of Shakespeare as a Man of Science*

It has been said that Shakspere by commencing his public life as an actor had the inestimable advantage of gaining a preliminary knowledge of all that was most likely to be effective on the stage; that he thus became the felicitous and unrivalled exponent of a language which had been 'emancipated from the influence of literal terminations,' and which gave matchless facilities for the expression of earnest and vigorous English thought; that the ignorance of the large majority of his audience enabled him to disregard restrictive canons and the tastes of scholars; that by exhibiting his marvellous conceptions in the pristine form in which they had instinctively emanated, he became the poet of nature instead of the poet of art; and that he warbled his native wood-notes wild without being 'cabined by philosophy,' or impaired by education (*H-P.* i. 104–106).

Unfortunately there is not a point in this criticism which has not been disputed, or is not open to

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dispute. In his conversations with Eckermann, Goethe repeatedly expressed the opinion that Shakespeare was not a theatrical poet but was rather a great psychologist, and that what he lost as a theatrical poet he gained as a poet pure and simple (*Bohn*, pp. 163, 173). So far was the language of Shakespeare from being emancipated from the influence of literal terminations that he plucked up his Latin by the roots as audaciously and as affectedly as Bacon. So far was he from disregarding the tastes of scholars that he paraded his scholarship as pedantically as any Holofernes. Whether or not his marvellous conceptions were 'cabined' by philosophy, Shakespeare was undoubtedly a profound philosopher, and at times the philosopher actually dominates the poet. His characters are as familiar with Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle as a schoolman; and we might as well pronounce the *Cogitata et Visa* of Bacon to be the native wood-notes wild of a rustic warbler as the Plays of Shakespeare.

That Shakespeare is to be regarded as the poet of nature is not to be denied. Goethe was scarcely guilty of exaggeration when he said that every student of his works must be aware that Shakespeare has exhausted human nature in all its tendencies, in all its heights and depths; and that, in fact, he has left for the aftercomer nothing more to do (*Bohn*, 50). But when we come to consider his language, if it is not blasphemy to say so,

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the poet constantly degenerates into the pedant. Surely he is nothing better than a pedant when his Yorkists and Lancastrians wax eloquent about the spear of Achilles, and the tents of Rhesus, and the madness of the Telamonian Ajax; when his saintly king, in talking of his murdered son, runs the changes on Minos, and Daedalus, and Icarus, and the Sun, and the envious Sea that swallowed up his life; when the lady of Belmont, in terror for her lover in the crisis of her fate, is reminded only of the sea-monster, and the virgin tribute, and the Dardanian wives, and howling Troy, and young Alcides; and when his Queen of Curds and Cream, brought up in a Bohemian grange, parades her knowledge of the Greek mythology by exclaiming,

> O, Proserpina,
> For the flowers now which frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon!

This certainly is not the language of nature; this certainly is not the warbling of a rustic poet; and most assuredly it was not the style of the Player of the Globe. In *The Return from Parnassus*, Kempe observes to Burbage that 'the University men smell too much of that writer Ovid and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter'; and our fellow Shakspere, he says, 'puts them all down.'

Neither is the voice of nature, or the warbling of the rustic poet, to be detected in the jargon of

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the law. Scott, like Bacon, was a lawyer, and Scott, like Shakespeare, did not hesitate to utilise his law for the purpose of his art. But Scott places his law in the mouths of persons conversant with law—in the mouth of advocates like Paul Pleydell and Alan Fairford, or writers like Glossin and Meiklewham and Bindloose, or pretenders like Bartoline Saddletree, or ruined litigants like Poor Peter Peebles. In Shakespeare, on the contrary, everyone talks law without distinction of time or place, of age or sex, and in utter disregard of dramatic propriety and the voice of nature. To account for his knowledge of the law Shaksperians have translated their idol into a lawyer's clerk, or a sporting attorney, or the companion of a legal friend. But these fictions fail to effect their purpose. No lawyer's clerk would discuss the effect of an attainder, or examine the compass of a præmunire; no sporting attorney would concern himself with the Law Salique; and no poet that ever lived would take the opinion of counsel on a metaphor, or resort to chambers for a phrase.

But Shakespeare was not only a scholar and a lawyer; he was also a man of science, and it is as a man of science that he is now to be considered. If the language of the scholar and the language of the lawyer almost told his name, the language of the man of science actually tells it. The scientific opinions of Shakespeare so completely coincide with those of Bacon, that we must regard

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the two philosophers as one in their philosophy, however reluctant we may be to recognise them as actually one. The most important depositary of the opinions of Bacon in matters of science is the *Natural History*, and as the result of the inquiry on which we are about to enter we must conclude that Shakespeare was the author of the *Natural History*, if we refuse to admit that Bacon was the author of the Plays.

The *Natural History* was first published in 1627, a year after Bacon's death. In this treatise, which Bacon intended to form the third part of his Great Instauration, he recorded his observations and experiments in what he called 'the vast wood of experience'; and accordingly he entitled the work *Sylva Sylvarum*, or the Wood of Woods. It is a wilderness as unlovely as the 'wood obscure' of Dante, and no one would traverse it for mere amusement. It differs avowedly from all other Natural Histories, in recording experiments which are 'vulgar and trivial, mean and sordid, curious and fruitless.' It contains a number of speculations which must be regarded as peculiar and fantastic. What is more surprising, it maintains, as scientific truths, a number of errors which had been all but universally exploded. At the same time, what is equally extraordinary, it anticipates some of the most profound conceptions of modern science. As Shakspere died in 1616, and as the *Sylva* was not published till 1627, it is plain that the

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Stratford Player could not by any possibility have entered this mysterious wood. And the wonderful thing is this. There is scarce a physical fact which is mentioned in the *Natural History* of Bacon that is not employed as a poetical illustration in the Plays of Shakespeare. There is scarce an experiment however mean, there is scarce a speculation however fantastic, there is scarce an error however obstinate and perverse, there is scarce a scientific intuition however original and profound, to be discovered in the *Natural History* that is not also to be discovered in the Plays.

Of all the theories entertained by Bacon the most peculiar is his *Theory of Spirits*. He maintains that 'the things that govern nature principally,' and by which 'most of the effects of nature' are produced, are 'the spirits or pneumaticals that are in all tangible bodies' (s. 98), 'animate and inanimate' alike (s. 601). In this theory there is nothing that the spiritualist would understand by spirit. It does not even involve the pantheistic notion of the Arabians, to whom we are indebted for the spirits and essences of the modern chemist. The *pneumaticals* of Bacon are not even 'the virtues and qualities of the tangible parts which we see' (s. 98). They are 'things by themselves'; 'they are invisible and incur not to the eye'; 'they are never almost at rest'; and they are essentially material (*ibid.*). Even precious 'stones have in them fine spirits' (s. 960), and there is a 'spirit in the wood' of an

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'empty barrel' (s. 136); there is a 'vital spirit of vegetables' (s. 30), so that there is a pneumatical even in a potato and a turnip; and in all living creatures there is a vital spirit which is 'a fine commixture of flame and an aerial substance' (s. 601). Anything less susceptible of poetic treatment, anything more prosaic, it is difficult to imagine; and yet even this lead is transmuted into gold by Shakespeare.

In his 'Experiments in consort touching Venus,' Bacon, as we have seen, attributes the ill effects of excess in 'the use of Venus,' to the 'expense of spirits' by which it is attended; and in the *Sonnets*, Shakespeare, as we have seen, declares that 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame is lust in action.' The *Plays* are positively pervaded by these strange pneumaticals. Among the spirits which are 'invisible and incur not to the eye,' Bacon includes 'the spirit of wine,' which, he says, is 'hot in operation' (s. 71); and in *Othello* the cashiered lieutenant exclaims—

> O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast
> No name to be known by, let me call thee Devil!

According to Bacon, tobacco 'refresheth the spirits by the opiate virtue thereof, and so dischargeth weariness, as sleep likewise doth' (s. 730); and in *The Tempest* Alonzo is 'attached with weariness to the dulling of his spirits,' and must needs 'sit down and rest.' Bacon tells us that 'soft singing,' and the sound of falling waters, and the hum

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of bees, are conducive to sleep, and 'the cause is, for that they move in the spirits a gentle attention' (s. 745); and in *The Merchant of Venice* when Jessica remarks, 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music,' Lorenzo replies, 'the reason is, your spirits are attentive.' Bacon tells us that the outward manifestations of the passions are 'the effects of the dilatation and coming forth of the spirits into the outward parts' (s. 715); and in *Hamlet*, when the Prince is startled by the appearance of the Ghost, the Queen exclaims—

> Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep!

and in *Troilus and Cressida*, when Ulysses beholds the heroine for the first time, he remarks:—

> Her wanton spirits look out
> At every joint and motive of her body.

When Bacon tells us that 'imagining a fall putteth the spirits into the very action of a fall' (s. 795), we cannot fail to be reminded of Gloster's imaginary fall from Shakespeare's cliff in *Lear*. In his 'Experiments in consort touching the emission of immaterial virtues from the minds and spirits of men' (s. 939), as an example of the fascination which one man may exert over another, Bacon relates the story of 'an Egyptian Soothsayer that made Antonius believe that his genius, which otherwise was brave and confident, was, in the presence of Octavianus Caesar, poor



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and cowardly,' and who 'therefore advised him to absent himself as much as he could, and remove from him' (s. 940). Strange to say, in *Antony and Cleopatra* Bacon's Egyptian Soothsayer is brought bodily upon the stage by Shakespeare, where, having warned the triumvir that Caesar's fortune would rise higher than his own, he says:—

> Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side!
> Thy demon, that 's thy spirit that keeps thee, is
> Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
> Where Caesar's is not, but near him thy angel
> Becomes a Fear as being overpower'd; therefore
> Make space enough between you!

The Egyptian Queen, like the Egyptian Soothsayer, adopts the sentiments of Bacon. The *Natural History* lays it down that 'the spirits of animate bodies have a fine commixture of flame and an aerial substance' (s. 601); and in *Antony and Cleopatra* the Queen, on hearing of the death of her lover, exclaims:—

> Husband, I come!
> Now to that name my courage proves my title!
> I 'm fire and air! My other elements
> I give to baser life.

As a corollary to his Theory of Pneumaticals, Bacon adopts the *Theory of Spontaneous Generation*. 'Putrefaction,' he says, 'is the work of the spirits of bodies which are ever unquiet to get forth, and congregate with the air, and to enjoy the sunbeams' (s. 328); and as examples of 'creatures bred of

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putrefaction,' he mentions the maggot, the weevil, and the moth (ss. 695, 6). Here again Bacon is attended by his double. When Polonius proposes to loose his daughter upon Hamlet in the lobby, we can hardly understand the words of the Prince without a knowledge of the philosophy of the *Sylva*; and a reference to Bacon's theory of spontaneous generation enables us to understand them. 'For,' says Hamlet, most inconsequently, 'if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,—have you a daughter?' 'I have,' says Polonius. Then, says Hamlet, 'let her not walk i' the sun; conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive.'

Bacon maintains a *Theory of Flame* which, apparently, was peculiar to himself. He holds that 'flame is a fixed body' (s. 31), and that 'commonly it is made of some tangible body which hath weight' (s. 774), and that, consequently, 'flame doth not mingle with flame, but only remaineth contiguous' (s. 31). Here again Shakespeare adopts the theory of Bacon, and, according to his wont, accepts the fact and uses it for illustration. Thus Proteus in *The Two Gentleman of Verona* explains that one love is forgotten for another, even 'as one heat another heat expels'; Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet* remarks that in love, 'one fire burns out another's burning'; the Tyrannicide in *Julius Caesar* protests that he pities Caesar, but that at the same time he has pity for the general wrong of Rome, and 'as



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fire drives out fire, so pity pity' ; and so impressed is the Poet with the idea that flame is a fixed body that in *Coriolanus* he introduces the Volscian chief as saying, 'rights by rights falter,' just as 'one fire drives out one fire, one nail one nail.'

Nothing in the history of science is more astonishing than Bacon's *Theory of the Celestial Bodies*. Bruno had been burnt in 1600 for teaching that space is filled with worlds, self-luminous and opaque, many of which are inhabited. Galileo, in 1609, by the aid of the telescope, had revealed the existence of innumerable stars which were invisible to the naked eye, and had thus supplied an unanswerable argument against the opinion that the stars only existed to illuminate the night. And yet Bacon, to the last day of his life, maintained that 'the celestial bodies, most of them, are fires or flames as the Stoics held,' only 'more fine, perhaps, and rarified' than ours (s. 31). Copernicus, in 1543, had published the great work in which he demonstrated that the planets revolved around the sun; and Kepler, in 1609, had published his demonstration that they revolved in elliptic orbits. But Bacon in 1626 regarded the *De Revolutionibus* of the one and the *Astronomia Nova* of the other as if he were a member of the Congregation of the Index. He obstinately adhered to the notion that 'the heavens turn about in a most rapid motion, without noise to us perceived, though in some

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dreams they have been said to make an excellent music' (s. 115)—dreams such as that of Lorenzo in *The Merchant.* But the marvel is that the omniscient Shakespeare with his superhuman genius, maintained these exploded errors as confidently as Bacon, and actually introduced them as the highest types of certainty into the love song which he composed for Hamlet:—

> Doubt thou the stars are fire;
> Doubt that the sun doth move;
> Doubt truth to be a liar;
> But never doubt I love.

A Garden, says Bacon, in his *Essays*, is 'the purest of human pleasures,' and 'the greatest refreshment of the spirits of man,' and two Centuries of his scientific work are devoted to *Theories of Horticulture.* Mr. Spedding in an evil hour expressed a doubt 'whether there are five lines together to be found in Bacon which could be mistaken for Shakespeare, or five lines in Shakespeare which could be mistaken for Bacon, by one who was familiar with the several styles and practised in such observation.'* Let us bring the matter to a test:—''Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus; our bodies are our gardens to the which our wills are gardeners, so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it

* *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, p. 617.

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with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills.' At first sight anyone might suppose that this was an extract from the *Essay of Gardens*. If his attention were directed to the words 'put parsley seed amongst onion seed, or lettuce seed among parsley seed, or basil seed among thyme seed, and see the change of taste or otherwise,' he would come to the conclusion that it was an extract from the *Natural History* (s. 527). But it is in reality a passage from *Othello*, where it is put into the mouth of that strangest of gardeners, Iago. Take, again, the speech of Agamemnon to the Grecian chiefs in *Troilus and Cressida*:—

> Checks and disasters
> Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,
> As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
> Infect the sound pine and divert his grain
> Tortive and errant from his course of growth.

Here, again, even if we hold that the hands are the hands of Esau, we must admit that the voice is the voice of Jacob; for Bacon tells us that in some plants there is a 'closeness and hardness in their stalk, which hindereth the sap from going up, until it hath gathered into a knot, and so is more urged to put forth' (s. 589). Bacon tells us that 'trees that show fair and bear not' should be bored, 'for that the tree before had too much repletion, and was oppressed with its own

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sap' (s. 428); and he also tells us that 'as terebration doth meliorate fruit, so upon the like reason doth letting of plants blood,' the difference being that the blood-letting is only to be effected 'at some seasons' of the year (s. 464). Accordingly in *Richard the Second* the gardener at Langley takes the hint and says:—

> We at time of year
> Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
> Lest being over-proud with sap and blood,
> With too much riches it confound itself.

In his 'Experiments in consort touching the acceleration of germination' (s. 400), Bacon remarks that 'dung, or chalk, or blood, applied in substance, seasonably, to the roots of trees, doth set them forward' (s. 404); and in *Henry the Fifth*, the Constable of France is so struck with the idea that he describes the 'forespent vanities' of the Prince as a mere outside

> Covering discretion with a coat of folly,
> As gardeners do with ordure hide those roots
> Which shall first spring and be most delicate.

The Bishop of Ely is equally indebted to the philosophy of Bacon. In the *Natural History* we are told that 'shade to some plants conduceth to make them large and prosperous more than sun'; and that, accordingly, if you sow borage among strawberries, 'you shall find the strawberries under those leaves far more large than their

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fellows' (s. 441). And even so the Bishop explains the large and luxuriant development of the Prince's nature on his emerging from the shade of low company by saying

> The strawberry grows underneath the nettle.

In his 'Experiments in consort touching the sympathy and antipathy of plants,' Bacon remarks that 'wheresoever one plant draweth a particular juice out of the earth, that juice which remaineth is fit for the other plant,' so that 'there the neighbourhood doth good' (s. 479); and he suggests that we should 'take sorrel, and set it among rasps, and see whether the rasps will not be the sweeter' (s. 487). And the Bishop catches at the idea to illustrate his fancy that the Prince's contact with base companions was positively beneficial to the development of his higher nature:—

> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality.

In his 'Experiments promiscuous touching plants' (s. 610), Bacon remarks that 'generally night showers are better than day showers, for that the sun followeth not so fast upon them' (s. 664); and the Bishop refers to the fact as excusing the unworthy night adventures of the Prince; so that in his speech on the transformation of the Prince into the King the thought and the language of

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Bacon and Shakespeare are completely fused and find expression in the characteristic passage:—

> The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality:
> And so the Prince obscured his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which no doubt
> Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.

'Of plants,' says Bacon in his *Natural History*, some, like rosemary, are 'green all winter' (s. 592); and in his 'Experiments in consort touching the seasons in which plants come forth,' he tells us that 'the flowers that come early with us are primroses, violets, anemones, water-daffadillies, crocus vernus, and some early tulips'; that 'those that come next after are wall-flowers, cowslips, hyacinths, rosemary-flowers, etc.'; that after them come pinks, roses, flower-de-luces, etc.'; and that 'the latest are gilly-flowers, holyoaks, larksfoot, etc.' (s. 577). And he remarks the influence that the sun exerts on flowers and the sympathy that exists between them (s. 493). In the *Essays* he develops the idea, and holds that 'in the royal ordering of gardens there ought to be gardens for all the months of the year, in which, severally, things of beauty may be then in season.' In *The Winter's Tale*, the seasons of flowers become types of the seasons in the life of man. 'Give me those flowers,' says

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Perdita to Dorcas, and addressing Camillo, she says:—

> Reverend Sirs,
> For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
> Seeming and savour all the winter long.

Turning to Polixenes she offers him the flowers of June, and says:—

> There's flowers for you—
> Hot lavender, mint, savory, marjoram,
> The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
> And with him rises weeping; these are flowers
> Of middle summer, and I think they 're given
> To men of middle age.

She then turns to Florizel, and, wishing she had 'some flowers o' the spring that might become' *his* 'time of day,' exclaims:—

> O, Proserpina,
> For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon!—daffodils,
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale prime-roses
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phoebus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and
> The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
> The flower-de-luce being one.

Kempe, the morrice-dancer, had no notion of an apostrophe to Proserpina such as this. It could only have been written by one of those University

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pens at whose talk of Jupiter and Proserpina Shakspere, his fellow, sneered, and whom in his folly he attempted to put down.

But the botany of the Master, when scientifically considered, suggests reflections more interesting and important than even these. Let us go deeper into the wood of woods. 'This writing of our *Sylva Sylvarum*,' says Bacon, 'is, to speak properly, not natural history, but a high kind of natural magic, for it is not a description only of nature, but a breaking of nature into great and strange works' (s. 93). '*The Transmutation of Species*,' he says, 'is in the vulgar philosophy pronounced impossible, and certainly it is a thing of difficulty, and requireth deep search into nature; but seeing there appear some manifest instances of it, the opinion of impossibility is to be rejected and the means thereof to be found out' (s. 525). Here we have the germ of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. To illustrate the possibility of this transmutation, Bacon, like Darwin, suggests experiments for changing the plumage and the colouring of pigeons (s. 93); and, like Darwin, he made experiments for 'the transmutation of plants one into another,' which he says 'is *inter magnalia naturæ*' (s. 525).* For effecting this *Transmutation*

* Compare the following passages from Darwin's *Origin*:— 'Some facts in regard to the colouring of pigeons well deserve consideration' (p. 17); 'I have seen great surprise expressed in horticultural works at the wonderful skill of gardeners' in the

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*of Plants* Bacon proceeds to suggest a number of experiments which, he says, had not previously been tried; and among other things he suggests the making of some medley or mixture of earth with the leaf or root of other plants, 'in which operation,' he says, 'the process of nature still will be, as I conceive, not that the herb you work upon should draw the juice of the foreign herb, for that opinion we have formally rejected, but that there will be a new confection of mold, which perhaps will alter the seed, and yet not to the kind of the former herb' (s. 528). This apparently prosaic prose is in reality good blank verse; and if we lay the sea-shell to the ear we shall detect the murmur of the sea:—

> The process
> Of nature still will be, as I conceive,
> Not that the herb you work upon should draw
> The juice o' the foreign herb, for that opinion
> We 've formerly rejected, but that there will be
> A new confect of mould which perhaps will alter
> The seed, and yet not to the kind
> Of the former herb.

But what we are at present concerned with is the science and not the poetry of Shakespeare. The great Poet practised the natural magic of the

improvement of flowers and fruit (p. 25); selection is 'the magician's wand by means of which he may summon into life whatever form and mould he pleases (p. 21). This, certainly, is Bacon's *Natural Magic*.

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great Philosopher; he, too, searched into the *magnalia naturæ*; he, too, foreshadowed Darwin. The author of *The Winter's Tale* gives an example of the transmutation of plants in the 'streak'd gillyvors' which Perdita viewed with contempt because, as she says,

> There is an *art* which in their piedness shares,
> With great creating nature.

Polixenes answers Perdita as Bacon might have answered Rawley:—

> Say there be;
> Yet nature is made better by no mean
> But nature makes that mean; so, over that art,
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art
> Which nature makes.

In the *Natural History*, Bacon suggests that 'if you can get a scion to grow upon the stock of another kind,' it 'may make the fruit greater, though it is like it will make the fruit baser' (s. 453). And even so Polixenes, in arguing with Perdita, continues:—

> You see, sweet maid, we marry
> A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind
> By bud of nobler race; this is an art
> Which doth mend nature, change it rather, but
> The art itself is nature.

The Transmutation of Species naturally suggests the kindred subject of the *Transmutation of Bodies*.

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In his 'Experiments solitary touching the impossibility of annihilation' he cites an obscure writer who had said that 'there is no such way to effect the strange transmutation of bodies, as to endeavour and urge by all means the reducing of them to nothing' (s. 100). In an 'Experiment solitary touching the growth of coral' he describes it as 'a submarine plant,' and he describes the changes which it undergoes when 'brought into the air' (s. 780). Even this lead is transmuted into gold when the Magician assumes his magic robe and Ariel sings

> Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made,
> Those are pearls that were his eyes,
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

The play in which the magician broke his magic wand, and doffed his magic robe, and drowned his book suggests by its very title another topic of consideration, which is more noticeable still. Mr. Boas admits that the young man who came up from Stratford never swam in a gondola, and Mr. Lee admits that he never crossed the sea. Bacon, on the contrary, was an expert in nautical affairs. In his *Historia Ventorum* he not only gives a minute description of the masts, the spars, and the sails of a ship, but he gives directions for the trimming of the sails, and shows a knowledge of the

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management of a vessel in a storm—tempestatibus majoribus primo devolvunt antennas, et auferunt vela superiora, deinde, si opus fuerit, omnia; etiam malos ipsos incidunt. Here again Bacon reappears as Shakespeare. In *The Tempest* Ariel flames amazement 'on the topmast, the yards, and the bowsprit'; and the Boatswain shouts, 'take in the topsail,' 'down with the topmast,' 'lay her a-hold, a-hold.' In the *Historia Ventorum* Bacon makes the remark that sometimes the sea swells without wind or tide, and that this generally precedes a tempest—etiam notatum est, intumescere quandoque maria absque fluxu aut vento aliquo exteriore, idque fere tempestatem aliquam magnam præcedere. In *Richard the Third* this remarkable phenomenon supplies a moralising London citizen with a metaphor for his moral:—

> By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger, as, by proof, we see
> The water swell before a boisterous storm.

In the second scene of *Macbeth* the 'bleeding captain,' when describing the attack of the Norweyan lord to Duncan, says—

> As whence the Sun 'gins his reflection
> Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break,
> So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
> Discomfort swells.

On this scene Mr. Lee remarks that it 'falls so

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far below the style of the rest of the play as to suggest that it was an interpolation by a hack of the theatre' (pp. 195–6). If this be so, the hack of the theatre was Bacon. In his *History of the Winds* he lays it down as an undoubted fact that the Sun by the action of its heat is the primary cause of almost all the winds.* And so fascinated is the hack of the theatre with this idea that in *Troilus and Cressida* he represents the Trojan Prince as saying to Ulysses—

> Not the dreadful spout
> Which shipmen do the hurricano call
> Constring'd in mass by the almighty Sun,
> Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear
> In his descent than shall my prompted sword
> Falling on Diomed.

* Sol proculdubio est efficiens primarius ventorum plurimorum operans per calorem in materiam duplicem, corpus scilicet aeris, et vapores sive exhalationes. Bacon's theory, if it does not anticipate, contains the germ of the best conclusions of modern science on the subject. 'It is well known that the tempests by which the atmosphere surrounding the earth is convulsed may all be ultimately attributed to the heat of the sun. It is the rays from the great luminary which, striking, on the vast continents, warms the air in contact therewith. This heated air becomes lighter, and rises, while air to supply its place must flow along the surface. The currents so produced form a breeze or wind ; while, under exceptional circumstances, we have the phenomenon of cyclones and hurricanes, all originated by the sun's heat.'—*The Story of the Heavens*, by Sir Robert Ball, formerly Professor of Astronomy in the University of Dublin, p. 217.

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The *Historia Vitae et Mortis*, like the *Historia Ventorum*, was one of the six specimens of the Natural History which Bacon intended for the Third Part of his Instauration, and which he published in 1622 and 1623 as illustrations of his scientific method. In the *Atriola Mortis* he enumerates as signs of coming death—the 'motus manuum floccos colligendo,' the 'memoria confusa,' the 'nasus acutus,' the 'frigus extremitatum,' and the 'clamor' of the dying man. In *Henry the Fifth* the Quondam Quickly, of all people in the world, translates Bacon's Latin into English, and describes Falstaff as 'fumbling with the sheets,' as 'playing with the flowers' of the quilt, as 'babbling of green fields,' as lying with 'his nose as sharp as a pen,' and his feet 'as cold as any stone,' and as 'crying out, God, God, God! three or four times' before he died.

But let us return to the 'mazes of the tangled wood,' which for the moment we have left, in order to inspect the more formal and symmetrical plantations. At every turn we take Shakespeare's obligations to the *Natural History* may be detected. If Bacon discusses how it is that '*emtus* is pronounced *emptus*,' and the like (s. 198), he prepares us for the 'rackers of orthography' in *Love's Labour 's Lost*. If Bacon describes the 'choir of echos in the hills' (s. 253) he anticipates 'the musical confusion of hounds and echo' in *The Dream*. If Bacon tells us that 'music feedeth that disposition of the spirits that it findeth' (s. 114) and



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that 'the falling from a discord to a concord makes the sweetest strain' (ss. 113, 835), Shakespeare reproduces the thought and the very words of Bacon in the opening lines of *Twelfth Night*. If Bacon holds that 'sleep nourisheth' (s. 746) Shakespeare in *Macbeth* apostrophises sleep as 'chief nourisher in life's feast.' If Bacon tells us how 'the rising of the mother is put down' (s. 935), Lear exclaims, 'down, thou climbing sorrow,' as the mother 'swells up toward his heart.' If Bacon speaks of the bitterness of coloquintida (s. 36), coloquintida is taken as the type of bitterness in *Othello*; if Bacon speaks of the virtues of carduus benedictus (s. 963), distilled carduus benedictus is recommended as a specific by the waiting-gentlewoman in *Much Ado*. If Bacon speaks of drugs that have 'a secret malignity and disagreement towards man's body,' 'a secret malignity and enmity to nature' (s. 36); the Ghost in *Hamlet* declares that the juice of cursed hebenon

> Holds such an enmity with blood of man
> That quick as quicksilver it courses through
> The natural gates and alleys of the body.

And if Bacon mentions mandrake and opium as 'soporiferous medicines' (s. 975), the evil genius of the Moor soliloquises :—

> Not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> That thou ow'dst yesterday.

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Even in their *Zoology* the Philosopher and the Poet are at one. If Bacon in his 'Experiments in consort touching emission of spirits' (s. 912) mentions 'the tradition that the basilisk killeth by aspect' (s. 924), Shakespeare represents Gloster as saying, 'I 'll slay more gazers than the basilisk.' If Bacon records an 'Experiment solitary touching chameleons' who are said to live on air (s. 360), Shakespeare feeds Hamlet with the chameleon's dish. If Bacon records an 'Experiment solitary touching the salamander,' who is said to live in fire (s. 860), Shakespeare takes the salamander as the type of Bardolph's nose. If in his 'Experiments in consort touching the influences of the moon' (s. 889), Bacon observes that 'young cattle that are brought forth in the full of the moon are stronger and larger than those that are brought forth in the wane' (s. 897), Shakespeare adopts the idea, and calls Caliban a mooncalf. If Bacon records an 'Experiment solitary touching the glow-worm' (s. 712), and observes that the light of the worm is 'drowned' by that of the sun (s. 224), Shakespeare adopts the idea, and the Ghost in *Hamlet* observes that 'the glow-worm shows the matin to be near, and 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.' In his 'Experiments in consort touching the secret virtue of sympathy and antipathy' (s. 960) Bacon queries whether 'the stone taken out of a toad's head' be not available for the 'cooling of the spirits' (s. 967); and this incontinently



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supplies Shakespeare with a metaphor, and the Duke in *As You Like It* with a moral:—

> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

If Bacon records an 'Experiment solitary touching shell-fish,' and asks, 'how the shells of oysters are bred' (s. 875), he merely puts the question of the sapient Fool in *Lear*: 'Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?'

In the preface to the *Natural History*, Bacon's chaplain says, 'I have heard his Lordship discourse, that men, no doubt, will think many of the experiments contained in this collection to be vulgar and trivial, mean and sordid, curious and fruitless'; but his reply was that his object was the illumination of the understanding, and not the gratification of the fancy; and accordingly in *Troilus and Cressida*, the king of Ithaca exclaims:

> Nature! what things there are,
> Most abject in regard, and dear in use!
> What things again most dear in the esteem,
> And poor in worth!

Even in their *phraseology*, the poet and the philosopher agree. The *Natural History* gives 'arcuate' and 'adunque' for bent, 'exile' for slight, 'ingrate' for unpleasant, 'inutile' for useless, 'munite' and 'excern' for strengthen and remove; and in *Troilus and Cressida* we have such

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'deracinated' flowers of speech as 'concupy,' and 'convive,' and 'mirable,' and 'tortive,' and 'errant,' and 'constringed.' In the *Natural History* Bacon tells us that 'hair and nails are excrements' (s. 58); and the Queen in *Hamlet* adopts the extraordinary phrase and cries out to the Prince:—

> Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
> Starts up and stands on end!

Impressed with the vastness of the 'multitudinous sea' Bacon in his *Henry the Seventh* speaks of a 'sea of multitude'; in his *Charge* against Oliver St. John he uses the phrase a 'sea of matter'; in his *Natural History* he describes the alchemist as trying to turn 'a sea of baser metals into gold'; and in *Hamlet* when the Prince talks of taking up arms against 'a sea of troubles,' there surely is no necessity for the Irving annotator to fly off to Aristotle, or to Ælian, or to Nicholas of Damascus, for an explanation of the phrase.

True, the Wood of Woods is not the Forest of Arden, and the style of the *Natural History* is not the style of *As You Like It*. Neither for that matter is the style of the Argument to the *Rape* the same as that of the Poem. The style of the *Tetrachordon* and the *Colasterium* is not the style of *Paradise Lost* and *Comus*. The style of the Theory of Colours and the Metamorphosis of Plants is not the style of *Faust* and *Egmont*. Goethe has revealed the secret of this difference

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of styles. In his correspondence with Schiller he remarks that he composed his early poetical pieces in prose, and then translated them into verse, but that when he proceeded to versify his prose he found himself in 'a different jurisdiction.' This explains the paradox and answers the objection. In passing from the jurisdiction of prose to the jurisdiction of poetry the mind rises to a higher level, it breathes a finer air, it views things in a fairer light, it brings a higher set of faculties into play. It stands as it were upon the mount of transfiguration, and the fashion of its face is changed. If the reader takes the trouble to compare the prosaic prose of the *Göchhausen Transcript* with the unearthly beauty of the finished *Faust* he will understand the effect of what Goethe calls the change of jurisdiction. And he will understand how the scientific experiments in consort touching flowers in the *Natural History* were idealised and transfigured in *The Winter's Tale.*

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## IX

### *Of certain Plays of Shakespeare*

WHILE these pages are passing through the press the Shakespearian Question has suddenly blazed into a conflagration and roused the literary world from its dogmatic slumber. This renders it expedient for any person who takes part in the discussion to define the precise position that he takes. In these pages, then, it is not proposed to prove that Bacon was a Rosicrucian; or that he was the son of Queen Elizabeth; or that he was the Shakespeare-Messiah; or that he was the author of the Plays of Marlowe and the Essays of Montaigne. It is merely proposed to examine the arguments that go to show that he was Shakespeare.

An examination of the *Great Cryptogram* and Bacon's *Biliteral Cipher* does not lie within the scope of this inquiry, which is exclusively concerned with the historical and literary aspect of the question. On this interesting question the positive evidence at our command, unfortunately, is but slight.

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Bacon intimates that he was a concealed poet, and he expressly acknowledges that, at one period of his life, his head was wholly employed about Invention; but these were mere casual intimations. Southampton, to whom he is supposed to have addressed the Sonnets and dedicated the Poems, was, at the time they were composed, his bosom friend; but if Bacon's secret was entrusted to Southampton, he kept it to the last. Matthew was his literary confidant and *alter ego*: but though Matthew occasionally cast a flash-light on the question, the light was immediately lost in the surrounding darkness. Ben Jonson was his literary assistant, his panegyrist, and his friend, and if there was any one who could have revealed the mystery of the Plays it was Jonson; but, unfortunately, much as Jonson has written on the subject, what he has given us is not a revelation but a riddle.

In the absence or deficiency of direct evidence the only method of determining a question of disputed authorship is that of which we have a notable example in the masterpiece of Butler. If there are works the authorship of which is acknowledged, and works the authorship of which is disputed, we compare the one with the other, and if, in the words of Butler, we find that 'they are analogous and of a piece,' we presume that they have one and the same author. The principles on which the argument proceeds are the axioms that 'identity of authorship leads us to expect similarity of charac-

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teristic,' and that 'similarity of characteristic leads us to infer identity of authorship'—the latter principle enabling us to ascertain the fact, the former enabling us to answer objections to the fact when ascertained. These axioms, indeed, are only modifications of the principle that 'like effects imply like causes,' which lies at the foundation of all science. The genius of an individual is a natural cause which produces its own peculiar effects, and when similar effects are produced we naturally refer them to the same intellectual cause.

Unfortunately this argument is not available in the case of the Stratford Player. The only works traditionally attributed to him are a ballad, an epigram, and an epitaph, which are beneath contempt. Bacon, on the contrary, is the acknowledged author of a vast amount of literature, epistolary, oratorical, historical, and philosophical, which has been ransacked for the discovery of *Parallelisms* between them and the works of Shakespeare. Mrs. Pott, the most enthusiastic of the Baconians, declares that 'a harmony of about forty thousand metaphors and similes' exists 'between the two groups of works.' But this array of parallelisms, like the array of an Oriental army, is liable to be routed by reason of its very numbers, which must include the worthless, the feeble, and the doubtful. Mr. Donnelly, in his well-known work, has devoted more than half of his first volume to an enumeration of the various analogies which with indefatigable

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industry he has collected. But the effect of the argument from analogy, as Butler remarks, is like the effect in architecture; and unfortunately the parallelisms of Mr. Donnelly are scattered about like the materials in a builder's yard, and are not combined into a building.

In the preceding discussion the Trilogy of *Henry the Sixth*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, were considered as suggesting that if we have regard to the learning and culture they display there is a difficulty in believing that they were the work of the young man who came up from Stratford. We now proceed to examine a number of the Plays in which the analogies with the acknowledged works of Bacon would lead us to believe that Bacon was their author.

*King Richard the Second* is in many respects the most interesting of the Plays. It was the first of the Plays that was published with the name of Shakespeare. It was catalogued in the Northumberland Papers among compositions which are acknowledged to have been the work of Bacon. It is the only one of the Shakespearian Plays to which Bacon himself has explicitly referred. It is a play the performance of which was connected with one of the most mysterious episodes of his career. 'A story of the first year of King Henry the Fourth' had been dedicated to Essex shortly after his return from Ireland, and 'the play of deposing King Richard the Second' was performed by his direc-

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tion on the eve of his rebellion. The Queen, who suspected that a conspiracy for her deposition was on foot, regarded the pamphlet as a 'seditious prelude,' and conceiving herself to be King Richard, she denounced the performance of the play as an 'act of treason.' The Queen refused to believe that the pamphlet was the work of the man whose name it bore, and she might well have supposed that the man whose name it bore was not in reality the author of the play. When Bacon demurred to appearing against Essex in the matter of the pamphlet, he objected that 'it would be said he gave in evidence his own tales.' The Queen therefore suspected that *he* was the author of the 'story of the first year of King Henry the Fourth,' which she regarded as a seditious prelude, and it is possible that she suspected him of being the author of 'the play of deposing King Richard the Second,' the performance of which she punished as an act of treason.

There were grounds enough for the suspicion. The appeal of high treason with which the play commences is set out with all the precision and with all the prolixity of a lawyer. The conceits, which, as Mr. Coleridge remarks, are scattered through the play, are characteristic of the man who could never pass a jest, or resist the fascination of a quibble. The effusion or effervescence of words, the superfluous rhetoric which, as Mr. Swinburne says, flows and foams hither and thither through

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the play (pp. 36, 7), is characteristic of everything that Bacon wrote whether Essay or History, Philosophy or Logic.* The very stories related by Bacon and by Shakespeare are the same. In the *De Augmentis* Bacon tells the story of Anaxarchus who, when placed upon the rack to make him disclose the names of his confederates, cut his tongue out with his teeth, and spat it in the face of the tyrant; and so in *Richard the Second* when Bolingbroke is ordered by the king to forgive and to forget his wrongs, he exclaims:—

> Ere my tongue
> Shall sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear
> The slavish motive of recanting fear,
> And spit it bleeding e'en in Mowbray's face.

In one of his speeches in the House, Bacon says, 'let not this Parliament end like a Dutch feast in salt meats, but like an English feast in sweet meats'; and even so, Bolingbroke in bidding farewell to Gaunt exclaims:—

> Lo, as at English feasts, so I regreet
> The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet.

In the *Advancement*, Bacon relates that Periander, being consulted how best to preserve a tyranny newly usurped, took the messenger into his garden,

* To enable the reader to understand what Mr. Swinburne means by the 'effusion or effervescence of words,' we may cite the passage in the *Advancement of Learning* in which Bacon laments that there was no 'just story of learning' containing 'the antiquities and originals of knowledges and their sects,

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and topped the highest flowers; and even so the Gardener in *Richard the Second*, gives directions to his servants and bids them

> Like an executioner,
> Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays,
> That look too lofty in our commonwealth.

In his *Natural History*, as we have seen, Bacon represents the blooding of plants at certain seasons, and the terebration of fruit trees that show fair and bear not, in order to relieve them from being oppressed with their own sap (ss. 428, 464); and the Gardener in *Richard the Second* adopts the same course, and says:—

> We at time of year
> Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
> Lest being overproud with sap and blood,
> With too much riches it confound itself.

Bacon addressed a 'Discourse touching the plantation of Ireland' to King James, and Shakespeare attributes a similar design to King Richard:—

> We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns,
> Which live like venom where no venom else,
> But only they have privilege to live.

And when Bacon, after his fall, found himself in 'the solitude of friends,' and bemoaned himself as in 'the base court of adversity,' he might well

their inventions, their traditions, their divers administrations and managings, their flourishings, their oppositions, depressions, oblivions, removes, with the causes and occasions of them, and all other events concerning learning, throughout the ages of the world.'

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have bethought him of the words of Richard when descending from the battlements of Flint Castle:—

> Down, down I come, like glistering Phaethon,
> Wanting the manage of unruly jades.
> In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base,
> To come at traitor's calls and do them grace.

And who but the author of *The Wisdom of the Ancients* would have bethought him of the 'glistering Phaethon' under such circumstances, and associated the myth of legendary Greece with the surroundings of a feudal castle? But the astonishing thing is this, that neither in his conversations with the Queen, nor in his consultations with Coke and Fleming, nor in his Declarations of the Treasons of Essex, nor in his Charge against Oliver St. John, does Bacon mention the name of the author of *Richard the Second*, though he must have been as familiar with the name of Shakespeare as with his own.

In March 1599, Essex left London for Ireland amidst universal acclamation, and in the Chorus to the Fifth Act of *King Henry the Fifth*, Shakespeare, in describing how London poured forth its citizens to greet the return of the victor of Agincourt, anticipates a return equally triumphant for the Earl:—

> As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit,
> To welcome him!

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This would seem fatal to every pretence for considering Bacon to be Shakespeare; for, when writing of Essex to the Earl of Devonshire, Bacon says, 'I did as plainly see his overthrow chained, as it were, by destiny, to that journey, as it is possible for any man to ground a judgment upon future contingents.' But the question is not what Bacon said in 1604, but what he thought in 1599. Following the example of Cicero and Pliny, Bacon kept copies of all his more important letters; and in his correspondence of 1597, 1598, and 1599, we have a number of letters addressed to Essex which give the lie to everything he said to Devonshire. In these letters he earnestly recommended Essex to undertake the government of Ireland, and was so far from regarding his overthrow as chained by destiny to the expedition that 'some good spirit,' he declared, 'led his pen to presage the Earl's success,' and all the circumstances led him to hope that Essex would prove 'as fatal a captain to the Irish war as Africanus was to the war of Carthage.'*

The language of the Chorus in *Henry the Fifth*, instead of being at variance with the views of Bacon, is in strict accordance with the language of his contemporary letters. And there are other indications in *Henry the Fifth* which point as an index-finger to the author. The dialogues in French,

*On the contradiction between Bacon's *Letters of Advice* in 1599, and his *Letter of Apology* in 1604 see note I.

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with which the Play abounds, are what might be expected from one who had spent three years of his youth in France, and who in after years corresponded with the Queen of Bohemia and the Marquis d'Effiat in French. If we are surprised at the knowledge of the topography of France and of the territorial titles of the French nobility which is exhibited in the play, we may remember that Bacon had accompanied the French Court to Blois and Tours, that he had resided at Poictiers, and that he had visited the Sieur de Montaigne at the *mairie* of Bordeaux. The discussion of 'the Law Salique which they have in France' displays the learning of a lawyer, and the conclusion that 'the Salique Law was not devised for the realm of France' is identical with the conclusion which is indicated in the *Apophthegms* of Bacon. The King uses the peculiar language of the *Essays* when he says that the crimes of the three traitors appeared before him 'chew'd, swallow'd, and digested.' The Constable of France remarks that the valour of the Dauphin was 'a hooded valour, and when it appears it will bate'; and it has been said that the *omne scibile* of Bacon comprehended none of the mysteries of sport which were so familiar to Shakespeare.* But even in his correspondence with the Queen the learned courtier talks like a country squire. 'I wish to God,' he writes to Elizabeth, 'that I was

* On *Shakespeare as a Sportsman* see note B.

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hooded and saw less, and was not like a hawk that bates when it sees occasion of service, but cannot fly because it is tied to another's fist.' So when the Dauphin declares that his horse is 'pure air and fire' he adopts the theory of pneumaticals which pervades the *Natural History*; and when he protests that he is 'a beast for Perseus,' and that 'the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes' we catch an echo of *The Wisdom of the Ancients*. In describing the death of Falstaff Mrs. Quickly, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, actually translates the *Atriola Mortis* of Bacon into English. Even Bacon's 'experiments in consort touching the acceleration of germination' (s. 401) are impressed into the service of the drama; and if Bacon states that 'dung applied to the roots of trees doth set them forward' (s. 404), the Constable of France suggests that the scandals in which the Prince in his nonage had involved himself had only accelerated the development of his nature, and that he had hidden his better qualities with foulness

> As gardeners do with ordure hide those roots
> That shall first spring and be most delicate.

But of all the coincidences, of all the identities, between Bacon and Shakespeare, the most marvellous are those to be found in the Bishop of Ely's explanation of the transformation of the Prince into the King. We are told in the *Natural History*



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that 'shade to some plants conduces to make them large and prosperous more than sun' (s. 441); that where there is an antipathy of nature between plants 'there the neighbourhood doth good' (s. 479); that 'night showers are better than day showers' for the purposes of growth (s. 664); and that this is exemplified by the strawberry that grows beneath the leaves of borage (s. 441), and the rasps which are planted in the neighbourhood of sorrel (s. 487). And Shakespeare adopts all this curious horticulture to illustrate the paradox that the Prince's nature had been benefited by the shade of low company, and by contact with base companions, and by unworthy night adventures:—

> The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality;
> And so the Prince obscur'd his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which, no doubt,
> Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.

The Northumberland Papers are doubly interesting to the Shakespearian scholar.* Not only do they catalogue *Richard the Second* and *Richard the Third* with acknowledged works of Bacon, but they contain four Discourses of Bacon's, one of which contains the germ of *Julius Caesar*. The Discourse is the one in praise of Fortitude, which he regards as

* On the *Northumberland Papers* see note H.

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the Worthiest Virtue, and of which he takes Caesar as a type. As Shakespeare styles him 'the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times,' so Bacon declares him to be 'the worthiest man that ever lived.' If Antony, standing on the scene of his murder, exclaims, 'here wast thou bay'd, brave hart, here didst thou fall,' Bacon in his Discourse describes him amid his murderers, 'as a stag at bay.' And if Brutus, on the eve of Philippi, is visited by his evil spirit, and exclaims, 'Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee,' Bacon tells us that the 'Ill spirit that appeared with Brutus in his tent' was in reality the 'noble Caesar.'

In other directions there are noticeable analogies to be detected. If Antony is to 'take thought and die for Caesar,' the Irving annotator refers to Bacon's *Henry the Seventh* as the only authority for the use of the word 'thought' in the sense of anxiety or sorrow (v. 143). If Antony says that 'even at the base of Pompey's statua great Caesar fell,' the Irving annotator admits that Bacon is the only writer that used statua for statue (ii. 91).* When Brutus says, 'as fire drives out fire, so pity pity,' he adopts Bacon's theory that 'flame is a fixed body'; and when Brutus says to Cassius, 'there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,' we cannot fail to be reminded 'of the

* 'Without a history of letters,' says Bacon in the *Advancement*, 'the history of the world seemeth to me to be as the statua of Polyphemus with his eye out.'



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peremptory tides and currents' of the *Advancement* which, if they be not taken in their due time, can seldom be recovered.

But we may ascend to higher ground, and take a more commanding view of *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare's rendering of the character of the mighty Julius, we are told by Professor Dowden, has bewildered all his critics (p. 285). The poet it is said insists on the weakness rather than on the strength of Caesar; the Dictator, it is said, appears in only three scenes of the play, and in the third act he dies. Why then, it is asked, is the play called *Julius Caesar*? and why did Shakespeare resolve to represent the foremost man of Rome in such a light? The answer, in reality, is not far to seek. The Roman plays, though classed as Tragedies in the Folio, are not Tragedies but *Histories*—Histories such as those in which Shakespeare has presented the actions of the English kings. 'Representative Poetry,' we are told by Bacon, 'is visible History'—'an image of actions as if they were present.' Poets and writers of History, he says with his wonted effervescence of expression, show us 'how affections are kindled and excited, and how pacified and refrained, and how again contained from act and further degree, how they disclose themselves, how they work, how they vary, how they gather and fortify, how they are inwrapped one with another, and other like particulars.' This is the method which Shakespeare pursues in *Julius*

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*Caesar*. He has given us a visible history of the time—an image of the actions as if they were present, and performed before us. True, he insists on the weakness rather than the strength of Caesar. But here again he acts upon the views of Bacon. He 'propounds to himself a person to represent in whom actions both greater and smaller, public and private, have a commixture'; and he represents Caesar as he actually was when he was murdered. The chief of the democracy had established a court; he appeared in public in the purple robe; he sat in his golden chair and received the senate without rising. Such is the testimony of Mommsen in his *History of Rome* (v. 336). His generosity had become tinged with ostentation, his courage with arrogance and his resolution with harshness; he had become fretful and impatient of contradiction, and his conduct was marked with contempt for all mankind. Such is the verdict of Merivale in his *History of the Romans* (ii. 335). All these traits of character are marked by Shakespeare; and he even reproduces the minor traits. Caesar, like Napoleon, had the falling sickness; Caesar, like Napoleon, was superstitious; Caesar, like Napoleon, had become a '*numen*' to himself; Caesar, like Napoleon, had outraged by his pride the men whom he had loaded with his favours; and Caesar, like Napoleon, showed strange irresolution at the crisis of his fate. These are the very traits which the great painter of character, to the bewilderment of

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his critics, has so vividly painted on his canvas. It was Bacon's way.

It is evident that *Julius Caesar* could never have been the work of one who had merely borrowed a copy of North's Plutarch in order to exploit a play. The author shows a familiarity with all the characters and events of Roman History that is only to be equalled by the professed historian. He talks as if he had been personally acquainted with those who played a part in the final agony of the Republic. Lepidus, for instance, had been Master of the Horse to the Dictator; he was one of the Triumvirs; he was Consul designatus; and yet Shakespeare describes him as what he really was, a 'slight, unmeritable man.' Cicero, again, is not essential to the play; he takes no part in the action; he is only introduced for a moment wandering aimlessly through the streets of Rome on the night before the murder; and yet what an intimate knowledge of the man is displayed by Shakespeare. The dramatist must have been familiar with the *Philippics* to know the ferocity of Cicero 'when cross'd'; he must have read the *Epistles* to know that Cicero 'spoke Greek'; and he must have studied the *De Divinatione* to know that Cicero attached no importance to the portents which struck terror into the soul of Casca. And mark how boldly Shakespeare deviates from North whenever his conception of character demands it. According to North the conspirators would have nothing to

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do with the Orator because he was 'a coward by nature' and would 'turn and alter their purpose and quench the heat of their enterprise'; but according to Shakespeare the conspirators with one accord exclaim

> O let us have him, for his silver hairs
> Will purchase us a good opinion
> And buy men's voices to commend our deeds.

And it is Brutus that exclaims

> O name him not; let us not break with him;
> For he will never follow anything
> That other men begin.

This is the true historical conception. Merivale tells us that 'all men, and all parties, agreed' that the Orator 'could not be relied upon to lead, to co-operate, or to follow' (iii. 208); and, curiously enough, Shakespeare puts this objection into the mouth of Brutus who, according to Merivale, was habitually disposed to disparage Cicero's claims to admiration (ii. 449).

The character of Brutus is delineated with the same felicity as those of Cicero and Caesar. 'Surely,' says Mr. Coleridge, 'nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering to the intellect of the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide than the tenets attributed to him—to him, the stern Roman republican—namely, that he would have no objection to a king,

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or to Caesar, a monarch in Rome, would Caesar but be as good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be' (*Bohn*, 313). But Shakespeare's conception of the character of Brutus was more accurate than that of Mr. Coleridge. Brutus, as Merivale tells (ii. 449), had been the last to join and was the first to desert the cause of the Republic; he had been the first to seek refuge in the camp of Caesar; he courted the favours of the victor; and he did not blush to govern Cisalpine Gaul for the Dictator while Cato was holding Utica against him. But the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide, as Merivale remarks, was 'by temper a sophist' (ii. 450); and the speech which puzzled Mr. Coleridge is exactly the speech with which a sophist would seek to satisfy his conscience when he found that he was being suddenly hustled into inconsistency, ingratitude, and crime by the arts which were employed by Cassius 'to win the noble Brutus to his party.'

According to the author of *The Mind and Art* of Shakespeare, 'it is the spirit of Caesar which is the dominant power of the tragedy'; and it was against 'the spirit of Caesar' that Brutus fought (p. 287). This was not the view of Shakespeare. 'Public revenges,' says Bacon in his *Essays*, 'are for the most part fortunate, as that for the death of Caesar,' an opinion which he repeats in the *De Augmentis*, where he says that the war against Brutus and Cassius was a war *ob vindictam* (l. II, c. xiii).

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This was the view of Shakespeare, and Antony, as he stood over the body of the Dictator, gives utterance to the thought of Bacon:—

> A curse shall light upon the limbs of men,
> And Caesar's spirit ranging for *revenge*,
> With Atè by his side come hot from hell,
> Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice,
> Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.

Of all the Shakespearian plays *Troilus and Cressida* is the one which has most sorely exercised the commentator and the critic. Mr. Coleridge admits that he 'scarcely knows what to say about it' (p. 306). Professor Dowden believes that 'this strange and difficult play was 'a last attempt to continue comedy, when Shakspere had ceased to be able to smile genially' (p. vi), and he styles it 'the comedy of disillusion' (p. viii). Mr. Swinburne writes that, 'it would be as easy and as profitable a problem to solve the Rabelaisian riddle of the bombinating chimæra, with its potential or hypothetical faculty of deriving sustenance from a course of diet on second intentions, as to read the riddle of Shakespeare's design in the procreation of this yet more mysterious and magnificent monster of a play' (p. 199).

Let us shift our ground, and examine this 'portent of supreme genius' (*ibid.*) from a different point of view. *Troilus and Cressida* was published with a notification that all the Shakespearian Comedies were the property of certain 'grand

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possessors,' and contemporaneously with this notification, *Shake-speare's Sonnets* were published with a warning, that Shakespeare was not the real name of the author, but the 'noted weed,' in which he kept Invention. In the play the lawyer presents himself without disguise. Pandarus, as we have seen, talks of 'a kiss in fee-farm,' Thersites of 'the fee-simple of the tetter,' Troilus of 'perfection in reversion,' and the pre-contract which serves Cressida for a marriage—conjugium vocat—ends with the 'In witness whereof the parties interchangeably' of the English lawyer. In the next place, the man of science presents himself as unmistakably as the man of law. The wanton spirits of Cressida look out at every joint and motive of her body. Troilus describes the hurricane as constring'd by mass of the almighty sun. Agamemnon tells how knots by the conflux of meeting sap, infect the sound pine and divert his grain. Ulysses exclaims with Bacon:—

> Nature! What things there are,
> Most abject in regard, and dear in use,
> What things again most dear in the esteem,
> And poor in worth!

And Ulysses like Bacon, holds that the earth is the centre of the heavens, and that the planets, with the glorious planet Sol to lead them, revolve around the earth.

Like the baronet in *Guy Mannering* Bacon had

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the trick of moulding his sentences in triads.* 'Some books,' he says, 'are to be tasted, others are to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested'; just as Shakespeare says, 'Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.' In *Troilus and Cressida* the characters, Greek and Trojan, have the self same trick. The servant of Cressida informs her that Ajax is 'valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant'; Pandarus protests that Achilles is 'a drayman, a porter, a very camel'; Agamemnon says, 'We shall hear music, wit, and oracle' from Ulysses; and Troilus exclaims to Cressida, 'Praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove, our head shall go bare till merit crown it.' Mr. Swinburne remarks the effusion or effervescence of words perceptible in *Richard the Second* and in *Romeo and Juliet* (p. 37); and if we want an example of similar effervescence and effusion we may take a passage in Bacon's *Henry the Seventh* in which he gives the instructions of the king to his envoys when he thought of marrying the Queen of Naples. These instructions, Bacon says, were to be taken 'as articles whereby

* The trick was so inveterate with Bacon that even when acknowledging his confession of corruption he exclaims: 'My lords, it is my act, my hand, my heart'—a weird echo of the words of Bassanio in *The Merchant*:—

> I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
> On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.

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to direct a survey, or framing a particular of her person, for complexion, favour, features, stature, health, age, customs, behaviour, conditions, and estate, as if he meant to find all things in one woman'—like Benedick in *Much Ado*. Here again the prose of Bacon is in reality blank verse, and if we apply the sea-shell to the ear we shall again catch the murmur of the Shakespearian swell:—

> A particular of her person for
> Complexion, favour, features, stature, health,
> Age, customs, 'haviour, conditions, and estate,
> As if he meant to find all in one woman.

Returning to *Troilus and Cressida* we shall find the very echo of Bacon's verse in the words of Ulysses when describing the talk of Achilles and Patroclus:—

> All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
> Severals and generals of grace exact,
> Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
> Excitements to the field, or speech for truce,
> Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
> As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

Sometimes the use of a single phrase, like the print of Dick Hatteraick's shoe, will supply a piece of evidence that decides a question. In the *Advancement* Luther is described as finding in 'discourse of reason the province he had undertaken in his war with Rome,' and Bacon constantly employs the phrase. It is so peculiar that when it was observed in *Hamlet* the critics regarded it

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as a misprint. But if Hamlet talks of 'a beast that wants discourse of reason,' Desdemona protests that she had never trespassed against Othello's love, 'either in discourse of thought or actual deed'; and Hector, in the debate whether the Trojans should let Helen go, asks Troilus and Paris,

> Is your blood
> So madly hot that no discourse of reason,
> Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,
> Can qualify the same?

And when Paris and Troilus persist in their opinion, Hector winds up the discussion thus:—

> You have both said well,
> And on the cause and question now in hand
> Have gloz'd, but superficially; not much
> Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
> Unfit to hear Moral Philosophy.

Here it is not Aristotle that Hector quotes. Bacon in the *Advancement* asks, 'Is not the opinion of Aristotle worthy to be regarded, wherein he saith that young men are not fit auditors of Moral Philosophy, because they are not settled from the boiling heat of their affections.' And as Hector adopts the words of Bacon so he adopts his blunder, for, as every scholar knows, it is the philosophy of politics, and not the philosophy of morals, which Aristotle forbids the young to study.

Nothing is more remarkable than the fidelity with which *Troilus and Cressida* reflects the political

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opinions of Bacon. He declares himself to be 'a perfect and peremptory royalist'; he 'hates the very word, the people'; nothing can exceed his fear of 'the huffing elections and general licence of speech' which bode disaster to the state; nothing can exceed his scorn of 'the ruffians and rodomonti,' who assail the seats of justice; and he loudly protests against the questioning of 'great counsellors and officers of the crown, by courts or assemblies of estates.' In a more philosophical frame of mind he lays it down in the *Advancement*, that 'nothing doth derogate from the dignity of a state more than confusion of degrees'; and these are the very words of Shakespeare:—

> O when degree is shak'd,
> Which is the ladder of all high designs,
> The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
> Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
> Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
> The primogenitive and due of birth,
> Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
> But by degree, stand in authentic place?

This is a string on which Ulysses perpetually harps, and to illustrate it he has recourse to the astronomy of Bacon:—

> The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office and custom, in all line of order;
> And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
> In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
> Amidst the other.

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And 'the glorious planet Sol, coursing through the twelve signs of the celestial sphere,' it may be noted, was the cognisance of the Prince of Purpoole at the Gray's Inn festivities of 1594, when Bacon was master of the revels. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, we read that

> In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd;
> But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent
> Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

This was the guiding principle of the policy of Bacon, and it was the moral and motive of the play. *Troilus and Cressida* is neither a love story, nor a comedy of disillusion; it is in reality a political tract—a tract in which James is the glorious planet Sol, and Bacon is the sly Ulysses.

Such is this magnificent monster of a play. It is an epitome of Bacon. It embodies his legal pedantry, his scientific crotchets, his deracinated Latin, his affected triads, his effusive rhetoric, his peculiar phrases, and his political opinions. It repeats his very blunders. Passages in the play cannot be understood without a reference to his prose. When Troilus reproaches Hector with sparing the prostrate Greeks, he says:

> Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,
> Which better fits a lion than a man.

What is this mercy of the lion? Bacon tells us. 'Of lions,' he says, 'it is a received belief that their fury ceaseth towards anything that yieldeth,

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and prostrateth itself before them.' All the characters of the play reflect the personality of Bacon. Even Cressida speaks the language of the *Advancement*, and sighs that

> To be wise and love
> Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above!

In *The Winter's Tale* parallelisms cease to be parallelisms; the lines approach one another, touch and coalesce. We have seen how Bacon in the *Natural History* institutes 'experiments in consort touching the seasons in which plants come forth' (s. 577); how in his *Essays* he holds that 'in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which severally things of beauty may be then in season'; and we have seen how all this is reproduced and transfigured in *The Winter's Tale*. Mr. Spedding claims to have been the first to point out the parallelisms between the Essay and the Play; and he confesses that if the Essay on Gardens had been included in the earlier editions of the Essays, it would have caused him to suspect that Shakespeare—that is Mr. Spedding's Shakespeare—had perused it. But the retired player died in 1616; and the *Essay on Gardens* was not published till 1625; and the *Natural History* did not appear till 1627; and the player could not have plucked a single violet in Bacon's garden, or wandered for a moment into Bacon's wood.

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*The Winter's Tale* was written nearly thirty years after the young man from Stratford had arrived in London; it was not performed till after he had left the stage; and it was not published till some seven or eight years after he had left the world. Whoever was the author of the lovely play it was written in the plentitude of his knowledge and in the perfection of his powers; and yet it contains inaccuracies in respect to matters of common knowledge so flagrant that, as critics and commentators have contended, it could not possibly have been the work of Bacon. The father of Hermione is said to have been the Emperor of Russia; Cleomenes and Dion are despatched to sacred Delphos; and the statue in the possession of Paulina is said to have been newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano. Such anachronisms pervade the whole Shakespearian Drama. But surely the dramatist who knew so much must have known that Aristotle did not flourish before the Trojan War; that Cato was not the contemporary of Coriolanus; that Nero could not have been angling in the lake of darkness in the time of Lear; and that there was no Emperor of Russia till long ages after the oracles were dumb. Shakespeare would only have smiled at the hyper-criticism of his critics. Absorbed in the study and the delineation of the permanent varieties of human nature, he cared little about mere chronological detail. And indeed he has



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himself exposed the folly of his critics by the mouth of the sapient Fool, who exclaims, 'this prophecy Merlin shall make, *for I live before his time.*'

In *The Winter's Tale* it is the sea-coast of Bohemia that constitutes the peculiar rock of offence to the precisian and the purist. Here again the methods of Shakespeare are ignored. When Leontes directs 'this female bastard,' as he calls it, to be borne 'to some remote and desart place,' the Shakespearian audience did not require to know the latitude and longitude of the place to which it was borne; it only required that the place should be *somewhere*, and that the somewhere should be designated by some familiar name. The audience never fancied the ship of Antigonus as setting sail from a sea-port in Sicilia, running up the Mediterranean, passing the Straits of Gibraltar, crossing the Bay of Biscay, traversing the North Sea, threading the Skagerrack and Cattegat, and sailing up the Baltic. The audience did not flock to the Globe for a lesson in geography; what it expected and what it found, was wit and humour, and a revelation of the mysteries of human nature. The Bohemia of *The Winter's Tale*, to the contemporaries of Shakespeare, was no Bohemia of the Map; it was a Bohemia of Wonderland—a Bohemia which its creator, for his own purposes, furnished with a sea-coast, just as he adorned it with the garden-

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flowers of Gorhambury and the villa by the Thames.

*Twelfth Night*, which was performed in the Hall of the Middle Temple in February 1601, as *The Comedy of Errors* was performed in the Hall of Gray's Inn at Christmas 1594, has been ransacked by the Baconians for parallels to Bacon. It is urged that the *diluculo surgere* of Sir Toby is traceable to Bacon's *Promus*; that Bacon like Sir Andrew despised the Brownists; that Bacon like the Clown was familiar with the opinions of Pythagoras; that the phrase 'if thou thou'st him thrice' was a sneer at Coke, the life-long enemy of Bacon; that the maxim of Quinapalus and the saying of the holy hermit of Prague to the niece of King Gorboduc could only have emanated from one who like Bacon was a schoolman; that the Pigrogemitus and the Vapians of the Fool could only have been the conception of one who like Bacon was familiar with Rabelais, and knew the Library of St. Victor (*De Aug.* v. 1); that the phrase 'they will kill one another by the look like cockatrices,' could only have been derived from the *Natural History*; and that the triads of Malvolio could only have been composed by the author of the *Essay upon Studies*. The reader will assign what weight he thinks proper to parallelisms and probabilities such as these; but he will be more interested in considerations such as those which follow. Shakespeare in *Twelfth*



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*Night* displays his delight in music, just as in *The Winter's Tale* he displays his delight in flowers; and as Bacon devotes two centuries of his *Natural History* to the study of flowers so he devotes one entire century to the theory of music. In that invaluable depository of the results of his observations and experiments in natural science he remarks that 'music feedeth the disposition of the spirits that it findeth' (s. 114); that 'the senses love not to be overpleased,' and that, accordingly, 'discords falling upon concords make the sweetest strains' (s. 835); that 'the division and quavering which please so much in music' are like 'the moonbeams playing upon a wave' (s. 113); and as in the *Essays*, he remarks that 'the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air, where it comes and goes like the warbling of music,' so in the *Natural History* he remarks that 'the sweetest and best harmony' is like 'the mixture of perfumes, and the taking of the smells of several flowers in the air' (s. 225). It is an unexpected delight to find these flowers of fancy in the glades and by-paths of the wilderness, which the father of experimental philosophy called his wood of woods; but there is a fact which is more surprising still. All these dainty and delicate conceits of Bacon—the conception of music as the 'food' of love, the fancy that a 'fall' in music makes the sweetest 'strain,' the association of the warbling of music with the 'breath' of flowers—all are reproduced by Shakespeare.

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In the Duke's address to the musicians in the opening lines of *Twelfth Night* we have the very thoughts, the very words, of Bacon:—

> If music be the food of love, play on!
> Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken, and so die!
> That strain again! It had a dying fall!
> O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour!*

In *The Tempest*, says Mr. Lee, 'the dramatist probably bade farewell to the enchanted work of his life,' and 'traces of his lineaments have been sought in Prospero, the guiding providence of the romance' (p. 208). Prospero, he says, is 'a scholar-prince of rare intellectual attainments, whose engrossing study of the mysteries of science has given him command of the forces of nature, and who magnanimously renounces his magical faculty as soon as he has restored his shattered fortunes.' The general opinion is that the play

* The Folio gives '*sweet sound*,' and the Irving Editor is of opinion that the reading should be retained. But it is difficult to imagine how a sound could either steal or give an odour; and accordingly the majority of scholars accept Pope's emendation and read '*sweet south*.' And certainly Bacon gives some countenance to Pope in the *Natural History* when he recommends that 'musk-melons' should be sown 'upon a bank turned upon the south sun' for the sake of warmth (s. 855).

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was performed before the Court in May 1613 to celebrate the marriage of the Elector-Palatine with the daughter of the King, and therefore after Shakspere left the stage. Mr. Lee, however, assigns the production of the play to November 1611 on the authority of entries which he admits to be forged, but which, he contends, may nevertheless offer information which is true (p. 206). But even this will not avail the biographer of Shakspere. The Player was no scholar-prince nor was he engrossed by the mysteries of science. But Bacon in 1613 was Attorney-General, and as far as there are any intimations of science in the play they point to Bacon. The description of the tempest at the opening of the play reminds one of the description in the *History of the Winds*; the mooncalf of Stephano, and Gonzalo's mountaineers with wallets of flesh hanging at their throats, are suggestive of the *Natural History*; the theory of pneumaticals pervades the play; and finally it is from the Essay of *Masques and Triumphs* that the Poet evokes the Spirits, the Reapers, and the Nymphs who appear when Prospero displayed the last 'vanity of his art' for the delight of Miranda and the Prince. But it is not this that constitutes the prime interest of *The Tempest*. Though the last of the marvels of the great Magician it was printed in the forefront of the Folio, and it was so printed in order to attest a strange renunciation. In pub-

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lishing the Folio the great Magician broke his magic staff, and doffed his magic robe, and deeper far than plummet ever sounded, he thought to drown his book. The book however was not fated to be drowned. It could not sink. But when the book is opened, the reader is startled by a strange and unexpected thing; for instead of the counterfeit presentment of the 'large-brow'd Verulam' he is confronted with the Figure of the Player.

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## X

### *The Conclusion of the whole Matter*

WE have before us a series of works the most marvellous that the world has ever seen, and it seems strange that there should be any question as to their author. For well nigh three hundred years the world has believed the author to be the young man who, in the words of Mr. Hallam, came up from Stratford, who was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, who retired to his native place in middle life, and who effected nothing during the five years of his retirement. Of recent years this belief has been boldly challenged. At the present moment there is much doubt and misgiving on the subject among serious men, and its discussion can no longer be tabooed as fit only for the lunatic, the faddist, and the fool.

In the present state of the Shakespearian question, two men are presented to us as claiming to be Shakespeare,—the one the young man who came up from Stratford, and became a London player, the other the son of a Lord Keeper, the nephew of a

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Lord Treasurer, the companion of Nobles, and the favourite of Princes; the one, a man of obscure origin, of defective education, of degrading associations, and of mean employments, a man of whose personality we know next to nothing—the other a man of the world, a master of all the learning of his time, a scholar, a lawyer, and a man of science, a wit, a philosopher, and a poet, a man of acknowledged genius, and by universal admission, one of the greatest of the sons of men. In the one case there is a startling contrast between the man as we know him and the works as we possess them; in the other, the works as we possess them and the man as we know him are in strict accord. And hence it is that in the latter case, we are ready to infer the authorship of the works, because we recognise the qualifications of the man, while in the former we only attribute the qualifications to the man, because we regard him as the author of the works.

Whichever side of the question we adopt, there are formidable difficulties in our way; but, as Dr. Johnson remarked, there are objections to a *plenum*, and there are objections to a *vacuum*, yet one or the other of them must be true. In the case of the authorship of the Shakespearian Plays, there are circumstances of difficulty which are common to both the candidates for this supreme distinction. As far as appearances go, neither of them claimed to be the author; neither of them published the

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immortal works; neither of them gave any directions for their publication; neither of them mentioned them in his will; and to all appearance, each of them was utterly insensible to their literary value, and each of them was utterly indifferent to their ulterior fate. The only difference between the two is this—that if the Player was the author of the Shakespearian Plays, he had every motive to proclaim the fact, while, if the Lawyer and the Statesman was the author, he had every reason to conceal it.

A dozen of the Shakespearian Plays had been produced before they were publicly identified with the name of Shakespeare, and they were not collectively published under the famous name till some thirty years after the young man came up from Stratford, and not till seven or eight years after he was dead. The Great Folio was published in 1623. Till recent years it was thought that this memorable volume was a mere gallimaufry of pirated editions, player's copies, and dogs-eared manuscripts collected in some inexplicable manner from the play-house. This idea is now definitively abandoned. Recent criticism has shown that the Folio Plays had been elaborately revised; that they had been revised, not for the stage, but for the study; and that the author had done his utmost to make them worthy of himself and of his future students. This is a reversal of all our preconceived ideas. All the biographers of the young Stratford man, from Rowe and Dr. Johnson to Mr. Phillipps

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and Mr. Lee, proclaim that he never revised his works, that he was indifferent to posthumous renown, and that he became immortal in his own despite. Mr. Phillipps, the most honest, and therefore the most trustworthy of his biographers, goes so far as to say that Pope's epigram not only expresses the traditional belief of his own day, but one which later researches have unerringly confirmed (i. 147). Here, then, we meet a paradoxical and mysterious fact. It is admitted that the Player never revised the plays, and yet the revised edition of the plays on its very title-page presents the Figure of the Player as their author and reviser.

But if the editors of the Folio present the Player as the author of the Plays, the author of the Plays himself declares that Shakespeare was not his real name, but was the noted weed in which he kept Invention. Here again we are bewildered. If the true Shakespeare was the great lawyer, and if it was he who elaborately revised the plays for publication, how could he have permitted the Figure of the Player to appear on the fore-front of the Folio for the gentle Shakespeare? Virgil on his death-bed directed his *Æneid* to be burned; but Virgil never assigned the authorship of his epic to Bathyllus. True, if it can be shown that the Player was *not* the veritable Shakespeare the Figure in the Folio would not prove that he *was*. In any case his claim to the famous name is doubtful. He never assumed it. The name that he bore was *Shakspere*; he was

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known to his Stratford friends as 'Mr. Wm. Shak.'; and even the Stratford Monument gives his name as *Shak*speare. But the names were so similar, and the actor was so well known, that it was inevitable he should to some extent be supposed to be the famous author. It is possible, even, that he encouraged the idea. But the idea has no substantial support. The contemporaries of the great dramatist were loud in their admiration of his work, but they say nothing of the man. They talk of the honey-tongued Shakespeare, but they do not tell us who the honey-tongued Shakespeare was. As to the Player, the great nobles who are said to have been his patrons are wholly silent. Southampton never alludes to him; Pembroke was not acquainted with him; Essex makes no mention of his name. Those who knew him best, and had the best means of knowing him, scouted his pretensions. Greene described him as a mere puppet who spoke the words of others; Jonson denounced him as a poet-ape; and the Burbages, at whose theatre the Shakespearian drama was produced, only rank him with Hemming and Condell as one of their deserving men. But his Bust stands as an everlasting memorial in Stratford Church and his Figure confronts us in the Folio. Belief in his authorship has engendered admiration, and admiration has developed into worship. His pretensions have been consecrated by authority, and have been hallowed by time, and are maintained with all the persistency of inherited

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belief. Shaksperiolatry has become a religion, and a religion once established bids fair to be immortal.

But nothing nowadays is sacred. Here, as elsewhere, the higher criticism has been at work. Difficulties in the way of the orthodox belief have stimulated inquiry; inquiry has suggested doubt; and doubt has largely developed into disbelief. Thoughtful men comparing the greatness of the work with what we know of the reputed author have been staggered by his defective education, by his mean employments, by his indifference to the plays, and by the elaborate revision to which nevertheless they were subjected. But the only thing that will satisfy the world that he was not the author of the plays is a demonstration that another was.

Such a demonstration cannot be supplied by the evidence of contemporaries, if Bacon was the Great Unknown. It cannot be supplied by the hints of Matthew, or by the prevarications of Jonson, or by the passing intimations of Bacon himself. Still less can it be supplied by Cryptogram or Cipher. The author of the plays himself suggests the only way of determining the question. In the *Sonnets* he complains that every word of his all but told his name; and the American school of critics has taken and acted on the hint. The English school had ransacked ancient literature to show the familiarity of Shakespeare with the classics; the American school on the other hand has ransacked the works of Bacon, to show the astonishing parallelisms between them

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and the works of Shakespeare. The old school at the utmost threw a doubt on the pretensions of the half-educated young man who came up from Stratford; but it is only on the labours of the new school that we can rely for a demonstration that Shakespeare was another name for Bacon.

Their argument is not a new one. In fact Bacon himself has anticipated the argument of Butler. Having compared the laws of nature with the laws of religion he finds them so similar that he considers it clear 'unum eundemque Deum fuisse, qui creaturis leges illas Naturae, hominibus vero legem Christianam dedisset' (*De Aug.* vii. 1). And it is by an application of the argument to a less momentous matter that the American school has endeavoured to show that the plays of Shakespeare, as reflecting all the characteristics of the acknowledged works of Bacon, must be deemed to have been the production of one and the same author.

That analogy is of weight in various degrees towards determining our judgment is certain; nor, as Butler remarks, does it cease to be of weight because persons given to dispute may find cases of seeming analogies to which weight has been attached, but which, in reality, are naught. The number and importance of the parallelisms which have been detected between the plays of Shakespeare and the acknowledged works of Bacon cannot be denied or disregarded. It has been shown that the plays are pervaded with the language of the

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*Law Tracts*; that they are saturated with *The Wisdom of the Ancients*; that they are alternately ennobled and debased by the science and the pseudo-science of the *Natural History*; and that they are decorated by the learning and by the philosophy of the *De Augmentis*. If Bacon employs the Wisdom of the Ancients for the illustration of Philosophy, Shakespeare employs it for the decoration of the Drama. The Arms of Briareus, the Transformations of Proteus, the Rape of Proserpine, the Fall of Phaethon, the Harp of Orpheus, the Horns of Actæon, the Brand of Althæa, the Heels of Atalanta, and the Loves of Endymion and the Moon are alike familiar to the Philosopher and to the Poet. Shakespeare refers to the Constancy of Anaxarchus, to the Advice of Periander, to the Wisdom of Pythagoras, and to the Frenzy of Pygmalion, as naturally as the author of the *De Augmentis*. The dramatist reproduces the philosopher as a man of science, and there is scarce a speculation in the *Natural History* which is not to be found in one or other of the plays. Shakespeare, like Bacon, adopts the theory of pneumaticals and the theory of spontaneous generation; like Bacon he insists that flame is a fixed body; like Bacon he anticipates the most remarkable conclusions of modern science with regard to the transmutation of species and the origin of storms; and like Bacon he repudiates the conclusions of Copernicus and Kepler, and obstinately maintains the doctrine of the Stoics that

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the stars are fires, and the doctrine of the Ptolemaics that the sun revolves around the earth. As Solomon spoke of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, so Bacon and Shakespeare speak of the strawberry that grows underneath the nettle, and of the rasps that are planted in the neighbourhood of sorrel. Poet and Philosopher both remark the bitterness of coloquintida, the virtues of carduus benedictus, the soporiferous qualities of mandragora and poppy, and the perilous nature of the drugs that bear an enmity to the blood of man. Both of them allude to the diet of the chameleon, the glance of the cockatrice, the tears of the crocodile, the element of the salamander, the bite of the aspic, the wisdom of the rat, the shell of the oyster, and the jewel in the forehead of the toad. Shakespeare even introduces the politics of Bacon into his plays, and is as marked in his contempt of the unwashed multitude, and as loud in his assertion of the divine right of kings as the law officer and chancellor of James. In spite of the natural diversities that exist between poetry and prose, the style of the Baconian prose and that of the Shakespearian poetry is fundamentally the same. They parade the same deracinated Latin, they affect the same triplicities and triads, they indulge in the same effervescence of expression, they adopt the same peculiar phrases, and they are guilty of the same solecisms in point of grammar. Alike they are unable to resist the

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fascination of a quibble or to pass a jest. In their style, in their scholarship, in their scientific conclusions, in their philosophical opinions, in their political prejudices, in their very blunders they are one. The effect of an argument from analogy, as the great theologian who has made it famous says, is the effect it produces as a *whole*, and it is as a whole that the argument for Bacon should be viewed. Each element may be as nothing; it may be as insignificant as a grain of sand, or a molecule of matter. But it is not the molecule with which we are concerned; it is the mass. The grain of sand may be unworthy of notice, but we cannot shut our eyes to the sand-hills and the dunes.

What influence this argument will eventually have upon the public mind it is impossible to say. To many it will be regarded as a demonstration, and by them objections may be disregarded. But Bacon has warned us, 'juxta oraculum illud Solomonis mirabile,' as he calls it,—'Non accipit stultus verba prudentiae nisi ea dixeris quae versantur in corde ejus.' The more obvious objections have already been considered. No one will contend that the scientific genius is incompatible with that of poetry who recollects that the author of Faust and Dorothea was the author of the Theory of Colours and the Metamorphosis of Plants. No one will insist on the diversity of style who recollects that the author of Paradise Lost and Comus was the author of the Tetrachordon and the



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Answer to Salmasius. And no one who has studied the plays of Shakespeare will care to rely on the anachronisms and inaccuracies in which they abound as proofs of ignorance and want of education.

In the present state of the Shakespearian controversy two objections only are worthy of consideration—the concealment and the repudiation of the authorship by Bacon—if Bacon is to be deemed the author. The general craze for notoriety which prevails makes it difficult to conceive the reserve and self-respect with which a great genius may shrink from the vulgarities of fame. Scott, though all the world was ringing with plaudits for the Great Unknown, maintained his incognito for years, and had it not been for the financial catastrophe which overwhelmed him would have preserved his secret till his death. Bacon, if he was the great dramatist, had additional motives for concealment. The player in his time was a rogue and vagabond by law, unless he was the lackey of a lord; and the playwright shared his degradation. The most eminent writers for the stage when the Shakespearian series commenced were anything but reputable men. Greene died of a debauch; and Marlowe, the gracer of tragedians, perished in an ignominious brawl. The trade of the playwright, moreover, was as perilous as that of the samphire gatherer in *Lear*. He was at the mercy of the Star Chamber and the Council. Nash was committed to the Fleet for some 'sclaunderous and seditious matter' which was detected in

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*The Isle of Dogs*; and Jonson and Chapman were sent to jail for an idle jest which gave offence to the authorities in *Eastward ho!* If we wish to form an idea of the social position of a writer for the stage as late as 1605 we have only to read the letter which Jonson addressed to Cecil, then Earl of Salisbury, and the chief minister of James:—'I am here, my most honoured lord, unexamined and unheard, committed to a vile prison, and with me a gentleman whose name may perhaps have come to your lordship, one Mr. George Chapman, a learned and honest man. The cause—would I could name some worthier, though I wish we had known none worthy our imprisonment—is, the words irk me that our fortune hath necessitated us to so despised a course, a play, my lord, whereof we hope there is no man can justly complain that hath the virtue to think but favourably of himself, if our judge bring an equal ear.' The nephew of Burghley, if he adopted the same course as Jonson, did not care to run the same risks and to subject himself to the same chance of degradation. Beaumont, it is true, was the son of a judge, and Fletcher was the son of a bishop; but neither Beaumont nor Fletcher was in the same case as the son of the lord keeper. Though, as he said, he had placed all his ambition on his pen, he never ceased to hanker after power and place, and splendour and magnificence of life. But well he knew that much as Elizabeth patronised the players she would never select a



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writer of plays as the colleague of Coke, or as the colleague of Walsingham and Burghley.

James was better fitted to appreciate Bacon than the Queen; in fact, there was much similarity of nature between the great scholar and the king. James had a sympathy with the stage. He took the players into his service, and he issued a proclamation commanding all municipalities to allow them to perform within their bounds. But even in the time of Elizabeth the puritan reaction had commenced. In 1597 the metropolitan justices had directed all the play-houses within their jurisdiction to be closed; and later on the municipal authorities in the country actually paid sums of money to the players to induce them to forego the exercise of the privilege conferred upon them by the king. To the godly the play-house was the synagogue of Satan, and by the serious-minded, the Great Folio itself, in the words of the Independent in *Woodstock*, would be regarded as a book to be consigned to Tophet. What was the great dramatist to do? In France, his younger contemporary, Richelieu, was not content with the glory of being the autocrat of France and the arbiter of Europe, but, to quote the words of Fontenelle, 'il y voulait joindre encore celle de faire des comédies'; and he was as proud of his comedies as he was of his dukedom and his hat. But what the great Cardinal could do, the great Chancellor could not venture to attempt; and so to the last he enveloped himself in his coat of darkness.

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It is not the life-long concealment which perplexes us; it is the final renunciation. To conceive the possibility of this we must understand the position of Bacon in November 1623. He had fallen from his high estate; he was in the base court of adversity; and it is pitiable to listen to his moans. He was living on the scraps of his former fortune; he could hold out no longer; he was at his wit's end for mere subsistence. He entreats the Lord Treasurer to come to the relief of his poor estate, and he writes to a treasury official to despatch the warrant for a petty sum to enable him to come from Hertfordshire to London. *Date obolum Belisario* was his cry. Under such circumstances even the money to be made by a revised and collected edition of the plays might have been an object to the miserable man, and Jonson and Matthew were at hand to communicate with Blount and Jaggard.

But in 1623, there was one thing which the fallen Chancellor valued infinitely more than his poems, his sonnets, and his plays. The most illustrious of the French kings declared that Paris was well worth a mass; and the most illustrious Englishman of his day regarded a seat in the House of Lords as worth all the *Hamlets* and *Othellos* in the world. In February 1623, he wrote a remarkable letter to the Earl of Oxford, apparently the great noble on behalf of whose daughter he had written his early sonnets to Southampton.

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'Let me be an humble suitor to your lordship,' he writes, 'for your noble favour. I would be glad to receive my writ this parliament, that I may not die in dishonour; but by no means, except it should be by the love and consent of my lords to readmit me.' But though the Lords might have been willing to readmit the disgraced magistrate, Bacon must have felt that they would never consent to admit a professed playwright as a member of their House. During the thirty years that witnessed the development of the Shakespearian drama, Bacon must have been an object of suspicion. Indeed the author of the *Sonnets* says as much. Oxford, to whom he had communicated his *Essays* and *Discourses*, while they were still in manuscript—Northumberland, in whose library there was a manuscript volume in which the two *Richards* were catalogued with the works of Bacon—Falkland, who was the intimate friend of Jonson—Pembroke, who since 1616 had been Lord Chamberlain, and to whom the Folio was eventually dedicated—all must have had their suspicions of the veritable Shakespeare. Southampton, who by a strange Nemesis was one of the lords delegated to authenticate the Chancellor's confession of corruption, must have known the fact. We may imagine the result. On a memorable occasion, the great Whig Lords required Edmund Burke to sign a paper, declaring upon his honour that he was not Junius; and it is at least possible

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that Francis Bacon, in 1623, was required by his fellow-nobles to make a public and unequivocal declaration that he was not Shakespeare. And what declaration could be more convincing than the publication of the Shakespeare Folio with the Figure of the Player?

This, it must be admitted, is a mere possibility, and possibility is not proof. But though possibility is not proof, yet when once a proposition has been proved, possibility is an answer to objection. No objection can impair the force of a demonstration: no objection can invalidate a fact. But objections may prevent the recognition of the fact, and may obscure the perception of the demonstration; and such an objection—it is idle to conceal it—is forced even on the most candid of inquirers by the Figure.

If Bacon was the author of the plays, he must be deemed to have deliberately repudiated the authorship, and to have given his glory to another. There were many considerations which might have influenced his mind in making this supreme renunciation. English books, he said, were not citizens of the world; a literary work received a second birth when translated into the universal language; the translation into Latin transmuted the baser metal into silver, and made it current. 'These modern languages,' he wrote to Matthew in 1623, 'will, at one time or other, play the bankrupts with books, and since I have lost much

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time with this age, I would be glad, as God shall give me leave, to recover it with posterity.' Accordingly, in hot haste, he procured his *Advancement*, his *Essays*, his *Henry the Seventh*, and portions of his *Natural History* to be translated into Latin. But his Poems, his Sonnets, and his Plays could not be translated into the immortalising language, and he might well leave them to perish in the catastrophe which he apprehended.

Nor was the sacrifice so great as with our present ideas we imagine. The boundless admiration of the plays of Shakespeare which we now profess had no existence while he lived. Plays, as Mr. Dyce remarks in his life of Marlowe, were scarcely regarded as literature in the spacious times of Elizabeth. Play succeeded play as novel succeeds novel in our own times, and the masterpiece of the season was as speedily forgotten. *Richard the Second* was an 'old play' in 1601; and *Love's Labour's Lost* with all its 'wit and mirth' was out of date in 1604. To the last, moreover, the yellow stockings of Malvolio evoked more enthusiasm in the Globe than the passion of *Lear* or the philosophy of *Hamlet*. And Shakespeare's superiority to his rivals, it may be added, was not universally acknowledged. Jonson, as we have seen, attracted far more general attention; Dryden preferred Beaumont and Fletcher; and Tate thought that *he* could improve upon the author of *King Lear*. The dramatists of the Restoration treated the Shakespearian drama as the

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barbarians treated the Colosseum; they dilapidated the mighty edifice to procure materials for their huts. It was not till the time of Dr. Johnson that any discriminating estimate of the value of Shakespeare's work was formed; and it was left to Mr. Coleridge to deify him as the omniscient, the myriad-minded, the superhuman, and the divine. Shakespeare, though he must have been conscious of his powers, could have entertained no such notion of himself. He must have been aware of the imperfections of his work. He must have been conscious of the lines which Jonson wished he had blotted out, of the opinions by which Jonson's illustrious namesake was outraged, of the indecencies which Coleridge attempted to palliate in vain, and of the 'damnable scenes' which even now raise the gorge of Mr. Swinburne (p. 33).

In 1623, moreover, the mind of Bacon was intent on what he considered higher and worthier objects. He had devoted himself with a religious ardour to the cause of 'Utility and Truth'—Truth, which was an apocalypse of the glory of the Creator, and Utility which was a new eleemosynary boon to be bestowed upon his creatures.* What was Poetry when compared with this? A *lusus*

* *De Aug.* vii. 3; *Nov. Org. Aph.* cxxiv. In proof of the religious spirit in which Bacon dedicated himself to his final task we have only to read the prayers he offered up at the close of his Preface, and of the Distribution of his Work.

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*ingenii*, a mere work of recreation. And it is quite possible that the great philosopher and statesman on the threshold of age may have looked on the intellectual revels of his youth and early manhood as a *Midsummer Night's Dream* and a *Winter's Tale*—a tale that had been told—a dream that had vanished into air.

Whether Shakespeare wrote for gain or not, it is certain that he did not write for glory. Whoever was entitled to that glorious name he never claimed it. Nearly thirty years elapsed before the Great Folio was given to the world as the work of Shakespeare, and during that time the mighty genius lay perdu. The Player never claimed the laurels, and the Philosopher renounced them. The last infirmity of noble minds is not the infirmity of the noblest. For what after all is literary glory? In the highest creations of genius it is the work that is immortal; the personality of the author melts into a mist. What do we actually know of Shakespeare? Whether his immortalities were composed in lodgings at Southwark or in chambers at Gray's Inn, we know nothing, absolutely nothing, about him. We are told that he was not for an age, but for all time. Yet what is it that time has conferred upon him?

The glory and the nothing of a name.

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# APPENDIX

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NOTE A.—OF SHAKESPEARE AND SIR THOMAS LUCY.

NOTE B.—OF SHAKESPEARE AS A SPORTSMAN.

NOTE C.—OF MONEY IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE.

NOTE D.—OF COPYRIGHT IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE.

NOTE E.—OF SHAKE-SPEARE'S SONNETS.

NOTE F.—OF THE SHAKESPEARE FOLIO.

NOTE G.—OF BACON'S PROMUS.

NOTE H.—OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND PAPERS.

NOTE I.—OF BACON'S APOLOGY.

NOTE K.—OF SHAKESPEARE'S KNOWLEDGE OF IRELAND.

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# NOTE A

## *Of Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Lucy*

ROWE and his followers are of opinion that Shakspere's 'deer stealing' was the cause of his flight from Stratford. But Sir Thomas Lucy was a knight of the shire as well as a justice of the peace, and he might have made 'a Star Chamber matter of it,' as easily as Justice Shallow in the case of Falstaff. Shakspere's flight, as it seems to me, was occasioned, not by his deer-stealing, but by the financial difficulties with which he and his family were overwhelmed.

It appears from a letter of Bacon to Sir Thomas Lucy which must have been written before July 1600, when Sir Thomas died, that a near kinsman of Bacon's had recently married a daughter of the knight; and 'this bond of alliance,' Bacon writes, 'shall on my part tie me to give all tribute to your good fortunes upon all occasions that my poor strength can yield.' When everyone has his fancy, we may be permitted to indulge in the imagination that Bacon visited Charlecote, and learned from Lucy how Shakspere had beaten his men, killed his deer, broken open his lodge, and kissed his keeper's daughter. He may even have tasted the Wincot ale, and formed the acquaintance of the Hackets and the Slys of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

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Bacon, moreover, would seem to have been acquainted with the Gloucestershire of Shallow. He writes, in his *Natural History*, apparently from personal experience, 'There is a church in Gloucester, and, as I have heard, the like is in some other places, where, if you speak against a wall softly, another shall hear your voice better a good way off than near at hand' (s. 148). Bacon, therefore, may have had all the knowledge of Gloucestershire which is displayed in *Henry the Fourth* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. True, this is mere fancy, but it is not more fanciful than the theory that there was an interval between Shakespeare's flight from Stratford and his arrival in London, during which he visited certain imaginary relations in Dursley, and formed the acquaintance of William Visor of Wincot, and Clement Parkes of the Hill (*Madden, The Diary of Master William Silence*, p. 373).

I see no reason for identifying Justice Shallow with Sir Thomas Lucy. The *luces* of the Knight of Charlecote were not twelve but three; and the 'coat' of the knight was obviously introduced to give occasion to the Welshman's wit.

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## NOTE B

*Of Shakespeare as a Sportsman*

MR. JUSTICE MADDEN loves to contemplate the young man from Stratford as the huntsman, the falconer, and the horseman (p. 350); but unfortunately the only way in which he is regarded by tradition is the poacher. The learned Judge regards the allusions to field sports which are scattered through the Shakespearian drama as a 'distinctive note of the workmanship of Shakespeare' (p. 319); and he commits himself to the assertion that 'when Francis Bacon took all knowledge for his province his *omne scibile* comprehended none of the mysteries in which the writer of these passages found unceasing delight' (p. 222). But it would have been strange if the son of a Lord Keeper had never been taught to ride; stranger still if one who had resided for three years at the Court of France had never observed how French falconers flew at everything they saw, and how a French cavalier could grow into his seat. And we are not left to mere probabilities on this interesting point. Osborne, in illustration of his statement that Bacon was 'a good proficient, if not a master, in those arts entertained for the subject of everyone's discourse,' relates that he himself had 'heard him entertain a country lord in the proper terms relating to hawks and

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## NOTE C

### *Of Money in the time of Shakespeare*

SOUTHAMPTON'S alleged present of a thousand pounds suggests the consideration of this interesting question. Mr. Phillipps is of opinion that in comparing the currency of Elizabeth with the currency of the present day, the former may be roughly estimated from a twelfth to a twentieth of the latter in money, and from a twentieth to a thirtieth in land (i. 21). Mr. Lee does not go quite so far, but thinks that in estimating the money value of Elizabethan sums they should be multiplied by eight (p. 2). Some incidental indications in the plays may assist us in the determination of this question. Falstaff's bill shows us that a capon cost two and two-pence, and that sack, which was subject to no duty at the time, was two and ten-pence a gallon; Mrs. Quickly informs us that the holland of Falstaff's shirts was eight shillings an ell; Justice Shallow's man tell us that a score of good ewes might be worth ten pounds; and the Clown in *The Winter's Tale* estimates the price of a tod of wool at a 'pound and odd shilling.' We learn from the record of Shakspere's action against Philip Rogers in the local court of Stratford, that two shillings was the price for a 'modius' of malt; and in the borough accounts, *apropos* of a cart-load of rubbish

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from New Place, there is the curious entry 'Paid Mr. Shakspere on lod of ston xd'—(*H-P.* ii. 373)—an entry which shows the state of education in the town, the name by which the player was known by his fellow-townsmen, and the value that he set on ten-pence. Shakspere's will shows that a memorial ring could be purchased for twenty-six and eight-pence. We know from *Bartholomew Fair* that the price of a place at the theatre ranged from six-pence to five shillings. The 'hired men,' as we learn from a contemporary pamphlet, 'stood the reversion of six shillings a week.' *Ratsei's Ghost* informs us that strolling actors 'scarce had twenty shillings audience at any time for a play in the country' (*H-P.* i. 300); and we learn from the official accounts that ten pounds was the sum paid to the Lord Chamberlain's servants for a performance before the Court (i. 341; ii. 87, 165). The papers addressed to the Lord Chamberlain in 1635 show that a good actor could make £180 a year; and we know from the *Never too Late* of Greene that the theatrical wardrobe of an actor might be worth two hundred pounds. The poet does not seem to have been as well off as the player. The highest sum that Henslowe paid a poet for a play, or for the right of acting a play, would seem to have been six pounds; and what the poet could have obtained from a stationer, as the bookseller was then called, must have depended on his popularity. The price of a Shakespearian quarto was a shilling, and that of the Shakespearian folio a pound. Between the manager and the stationer, Jonson contrived to secure a livelihood, if he did not, like Shakspere and Alleyne, accumulate a fortune.

The biography of Bacon supplies us with a variety of indications as to the value of money in his time. On one occasion he found himself in a spunging house for a debt of £300. In or about 1598 Essex, as he says in his *Apology*,



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infeoffed him of land which he subsequently sold for £1800. When he was appointed Attorney-General he expended £2000 on the Masque which celebrated the marriage of Somerset with Lady Essex. His income as Attorney-General, he says in a letter to James, was six thousand a year, 'besides caps and courtesies,' and his salary as Clerk of the Star Chamber was twelve hundred a year, which, he says, was 'a good commendam.' But his tastes were expensive; and when he became Chancellor he was more than £20,000 in debt, and his confession of corruption tells the rest. His enemies estimated his illicit gains at a hundred thousand pounds: but this, as Macaulay says, was probably an exaggeration. Among the presents taken from suitors in his court, his confession admits 'a dozen gold buttons of the value of fifty pounds'; 'a suit of hangings, worth one hundred and three score pounds, and better'; 'a rich cabinet prized at eight hundred pounds'; 'a diamond ring worth five or six hundred pounds'; and 'a taster of gold worth between four hundred and five hundred pounds.' The sum total of what he confesses he received from suitors in gifts and money amounted to upwards of ten thousand pounds; and a fine of forty thousand pounds was the penalty imposed upon him by the Lords.

The results would be somewhat startling if we multiplied these various sums by eight.

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## NOTE D

*Of Copyright in the time of Shakespeare*

THE Decree transcribed by Mrs. Stopes, as we have seen, recites that the members of the Stationers' Company 'have great part of their estates in copies,' and that 'by ancient usage' their title to such estates was established by being 'duly entered in the Register Book of the Company.' The decree proceeds to ordain that if an entry of a book is made in favour of a member of the company, and any other member shall print, import, or expose for sale any copy of the book so entered, the member 'so offending shall forfeit' to the company 'the sum of twelve pence for every copy' so imprinted, imported, or exposed for sale. And finally the decree authorises the Master and Wardens of the Company to search the warehouse of any person suspected of evading the law, and to impose upon him a penalty of ten pounds in case he should refuse to permit the search. Of course the stationer could not register a book as his copy until he had procured the manuscript from the author or his representatives; and in the case of a work which was likely to be popular a smart price was paid for the manuscript, as we learn from the stationer who published the first collected edition of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher. Accordingly Heywood, who, if we may

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believe him, had a hand in some two hundred and twenty plays, records the fact that some of his contemporary playwrights 'used a double sale of their labours, first to the stage and after to the press.' Such, notably, was the practice of Jonson; and Mr. Knight is of opinion that the publication of the Shakespearian plays, which were published in the life of Shakspere, was 'authorised by some power having the right,' if it thought proper, 'to prevent it.' Even when works were circulated in manuscript the pirates could easily be baffled. Bacon, in the dedication of the first edition of his *Essays* to his brother Anthony, compares himself to those that have an orchard ill-neighboured, and gather their fruit before it is ripe to prevent stealing. 'These fragments of my conceits,' he says, 'were going to print; to labour the stay of them had been troublesome, and subject to interpretation; to let them pass had been to adventure the wrong they might receive by untrue copies, or by some garnishment which it might please any that should set them forth to bestow upon them'; and 'therefore,' he adds, 'I held it best discretion to publish them myself.' Accordingly Bacon disposed of his manuscript to a member of the company; and the *Essays* were forthwith entered as 'the copy' of Humfrey Hooper, 'under the hand of Master Francis Bacon.'

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## NOTE E

### *Of Shake-speare's Sonnets*

WHENEVER the Sonnets were composed, they were not published in a collected form till 1609, when they appeared as *Shake-speares Sonnets.* The author was not unconscious of their value, and when he declares that

> Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of Princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

he intimates that he contemplated their eventual publication. He evidently kept copies of them, and the extraordinary care with which they are arranged, punctuated, and printed, in the edition of 1609, is of itself a proof that they were published with the author's concurrence and consent, if not under his actual supervision.

Mr. Lee, it is true, has a theory that the publication of 1609 was a piratical enterprise carried out by a 'camp-follower' of the press, named Thomas Thorpe, with the aid of a 'stationer's assistant' named William Hall (pp. 76–79)—a theory based on the initials T. T. and W. H., which occur in the dedication of the work. But it is difficult to see how the T. T. and W. H. of Mr. Lee could have managed to collect these hundred and fifty-four mysterious poems. The sonnets of Shakespeare were not scattered

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broadcast—*rapidis ludibria ventis.* They were never intended to form the gossip of the garde-robe of the theatre, or to supply matter of scandal for the tavern. Neither Pembroke nor Southampton was immaculate in his morals, and whether the Dark Lady was Mistress Fitton, or Mistress Vernon, or some other Angel, neither of the young nobles was likely to have circulated the sonnets among friends who would communicate them to such persons as the camp-follower and the stationer's assistant. Addressed as they were to a great noble and to a great lady, and dealing with the most delicate affairs, Shakspere would never have ventured to give copies to the players with whom he lived, or to the gallants with whom he drank. During the interval between 1590 and 1609 two only of the sonnets had escaped from the custody of the owner—the sonnet with the *double entendre* which Shakespeare subsequently put into the mouth of Iago (*S.* 138), and the sonnet referring to Boccaccio's story of Rusticus and Alibech, which is usually presented to English readers in the French of Mirabeau (*S.* 144). Whether the sonnets were addressed to Herbert or to Southampton, it was the author only who could have arranged them and committed them to the press. But whoever committed them to the press, they contained the sonnet which warned the public that Shakespeare was not the real name of the author, but the noted weed in which he kept Invention (*S.* 76).

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## NOTE F

*Of the Shakespeare Folio*

THE American editor of the Plays, when speaking of the Great Folio, remarks that 'such is the authority given to this volume by the auspices under which it appeared, that had it been thoroughly prepared for the press, and printed with care, there would have been no appeal from its text.' That it was not thoroughly prepared for the press, and that it was not printed with care, must be admitted; though we may leave the twenty thousand misprints of Sir Theodore Martin (p. 15) to match with the forty thousand parallelisms of Mrs. Pott. But whatever theory we form of the authorship of the plays, the typographical imperfections of the Folio may be explained. Shakspere was dead: Bacon could not act; Hemming and Condell were not literary men; and the great book was printed in such a hurry that Jonson—if he was entrusted with the duty of correcting the press—could not possibly have discharged the duty with effect. Mr. Lee tells us that there exists a copy of the Folio in which a proof leaf of *Hamlet* is bound up with the corrected text (p. 255), and this might possibly supply a clue to the corrector; but unfortunately Mr. Lee is unable to ascertain 'the present whereabouts' of this interesting copy (*ibid.*).

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With all its imperfections, the Folio is our sole authority for the masterpieces which were published for the first time in that memorable volume; and as to the whole of the thirty-six plays, we may well accept the judgment of Mr. Phillipps, when he says that 'so far from being astonished at the textual imperfections of the Folio, we ought to be profoundly thankful for what is, under the circumstances, its marvellous state of comparative excellence' (i. 265).

It is important to remark that the careless printing is quite consistent with the careful revision of the plays. The Folio edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* is a mere reprint of the Quarto edition of 1598, which is described on the title-page as having been 'newly corrected and augmented' by the author; and yet the Quarto contains the portentous misprint '*Bone boon for boon prescian*,' which disfigures the Folio. When this escaped the eye of the author himself we need not be surprised at the '*Qualtitie calmie custure me*' which occurs in the address of Pistol to his prisoner in *Henry the Fifth*.

Unfortunately the typographical imperfection of the Folio is not the only misfortune to be deplored in the accepted text of Shakespeare. In revising the plays for publication Shakespeare, as might have been anticipated, omitted numerous passages in the Quartos which were inconsistent with his ideas of perfection. This was peculiarly the case with *Hamlet*. Mr. Swinburne has described how, scene by scene, line for line, stroke upon stroke, and touch after touch, the author went over all the whole laboured ground again, in order to make it worthy of himself and of his future students (p. 163). Every passage he omitted, therefore, he must be supposed to have deliberately omitted, as inconsistent with the perfection of his work as he finally conceived it. These omissions, strange to say, have been restored by those who have affected to give us Shakespeare's

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text. The two hundred and fifty lines which he deemed unworthy of his work have been considered too valuable to be lost, and have been foisted back into the place from which the author had expunged them. Take, for example, Hamlet's expostulation with his mother:—

> You cannot call it love, for at your age
> The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
> And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
> Would step from this to this? *Sense, sure, you have,*
> *Else could you not have motion; but, sure, that sense*
> *Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,*
> *Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd*
> *But it reserved some quantity of choice*
> *To serve in such a difference.* What devil was't
> That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
> *Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,*
> *Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,*
> *Or but a sickly part of one true sense*
> *Could not so mope.*
> O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell, etc.

The lines printed in italics are nothing to boast of at the best, and accordingly, with true judgment, the author omitted them in the Folio where the passage in its concentrated force reads thus:—

> You cannot call it love, for at your age
> The hey-day of the blood is tame, it's humble,
> And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
> Would step from this to this? What devil was't
> That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
> O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell, etc.

But the lines in italics are found in the Quarto, and the stone that the builder rejected has been made the head-stone of the corner by his workmen. And this is done in the face of the declaration that the Folio gives the plays of Shakespeare 'cur'd and perfect of their limbs' and 'absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them.'

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Take, again, Hamlet's final words to his mother, which in the vulgar text stand thus :—

> Good night; but go not to my uncle's bed;
> Assume a virtue if you have it not.
> *That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,*
> *Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,*
> *That to the use of actions fair and good*
> *He likewise gives a frock, or livery,*
> *That aptly is put on.* Refrain to night,
> And that shall lend a kind of easiness
> To the next abstinence; *the next more easy,*
> *For use almost can change the stamp of nature,*
> *And master the devil, or throw him out,*
> *With wondrous potency.* Once more, good-night.

Here what could be more unnatural than a lecture on the effect of habit in the mouth of one who is quivering with emotion? The master accordingly in revising his masterpiece expunged it, and in the Folio we have the vigorous and natural finale :—

> Good night, but go not to my uncle's bed;
> Assume a virtue if you have it not.
> Refrain to night,
> And that shall lend a kind of easiness
> To the next abstinence. Once more, good night!

Even the ineptitudes of Osric and the imbecilities of the old Lord, rejected as they were by the great writer, have been foisted back into his text.

A similar outrage has been perpetrated on *King Lear*. Mr. Craig acknowledges 'the superiority of the Folio text'; but 'the chief value of the Quarto text,' he says, 'is that it preserves three hundred lines not found in the Folio' (p. xiii). Every omission, as it seems to me, was made with consummate judgment, and effected a wonderful improvement. But these three hundred lines have also been foisted back into the text of Shakespeare. The editors of the German masterpiece might as well foist the *Paralipomena* of Goethe into *Faust*.

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## NOTE G

### *Of Bacon's Promus*

THE Harleian collection in the British Museum contains a manuscript in Bacon's own hand which Mrs. Henry Pott has published under the name of *Promus*, and the genuineness of which is recognised by Mr. Spedding. A facsimile of folio 96 is given by Mrs. Pott, which enables us to form a conception of Bacon's handwriting, and of the character of the entries. The entries, as Mr. Spedding says, consist of single sentences set down one after another without any marks between them. The collection contains numerous quotations from the Latin poets—French, Spanish, and Italian proverbs—and verses from the Bible—all set down without order or connexion. The collection is rich in wise sentences and axioms of all kinds; but it is largely composed of 'Formularies and Elegancies' of Expression (p. 384) and 'Continuances of all kinds' of Discourse (p. 447). Of the Formularies and Elegancies, the first examples that Bacon gives are Good morrow—Good swoear (*i.e.* soir)—Good travail—Good matins—Good betimes—and Bon jour, Bridegroom (p. 384). Among the Elegancies we find such expressions as All 's one—For the rest—Is it possible—What else—Well—Amen—Not the less for that—O the—an entry which would be unintelli-

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gible were it not for the 'O the father' of Dame Quickly, the 'O the heavens' of Ophelia and Miranda, and the 'O the gods' of Cressida and Regan. As an example of Continuances, we have 'to the end, saving that, whereas, yet' (p. 447), a sequence which reminds one of the *verum, enimvero, quandoquidem, igitur, ergo*, of the Curate of Meudon.

These entries have been ransacked for parallelisms with the Plays of Shakespeare. Mrs. Pott tells us she finds by actual count four thousand four hundred and four instances in which the entries are reproduced in the plays; and Mr. Reed selects some fifty or sixty, which must strike every candid reader as worthy of consideration (pp. 70–76). Among these entries the most noticeable are—*Bon jour, Bridegroom* (1194)—*Romē* (1200)—*Golden sleep* (1207)—the *Cock* (1211)—the *Lark* (1212)—and *Uprouse*, in the sense of getting up early in the morning (1215). Baconians accordingly point with an air of triumph to Mercutio's ridicule of the phrase *Bon jour*; to Juliet's expostulation,

> Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day:
> It was the nightingale and not the lark;

to Capulet's 'Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crow'd'; and above all, to the speech of Friar Laurence when Romeo visits his cell:—

> But when unbruisèd youth with unstuff'd brain
> Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign;
> Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
> Thou art aroused by some distemperature.

The question has been mooted, whether the *Play* was indebted to *Promus*, or whether *Promus* was indebted to the *Play*? But if *Promus* was indebted to the *Play*, it is strange that Bacon could have found nothing better to extract than *Bon jour, Uprouse*, and *Golden sleep*.

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The specimen of Bacon's handwriting which Mrs. Pott has prefixed to her edition may be made available for another purpose. In the second garden scene Juliet exclaims, 'Romeo!' and in the Folio Romeo ejaculates 'My Neece.' The received text gives 'My sweet,' or 'My dear,' forms that the most stupid of compositors could never have mistaken for the Folio misprint. In Bacon's handwriting the arch of the letter *m* is made at the bottom, and not at the top of the letter, and in this case the word *Name* might easily be travestied in *Neece*. The true reading evidently is 'My name!' If Shakespeare had written 'a *babbled* of green fields' no compositor that ever lived would have perverted this into 'a *Table* of green fields.' If we look at the third line of the Bacon facsimile we shall find that the letter *F* as he wrote it might easily be mistaken for the letter *T*, and this suggests that the true reading is 'a *fabled* of green fields.' And when Pistol replies to the French soldier 'Qualtitie calmie custure me. Art thou a gentleman?' may not the true reading be 'Quality, cullion? Assure me, art thou a gentleman?'

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## NOTE H

### *Of the Northumberland Papers*

In 1867 there was discovered in Northumberland House in London a manuscript volume containing a number of papers which are admittedly the work of Bacon. The title-page, of which Mr. Spedding gives a facsimile, supplies a table of contents, which commences with Four Discourses in Praise of The Worthiest Virtue, The Worthiest Affection, The Worthiest Power, and The Worthiest Person, which Mr. Spedding published as '*A Conference of Pleasure* composed for some festive occasion, about the year 1592, by Francis Bacon.' In addition to the Four Discourses the table of contents enumerates 'the Earl of Arundel's letter to the Queen'; 'Speeches for my Lord of Essex at the tilt'; 'A speech for my Lord of Sussex tilt'; 'Leicester's Commonwealth, Incerto Auth.'; '*Orations* at Gray's Inn Revels by Mr. Francis Bacon'; '*Essays* by the same author'; '*Richard the Second*,' '*Richard the Third*,' '*Asmund and Cornelia*,' '*Isle of Dogs*, frmnt. by Thomas Nash.' Arundel, the great noble in whose mansion Bacon died, was under a cloud in consequence of his father's adhesion to the Queen of Scots, and in his letter to Elizabeth he may have availed himself of the serviceable pen of Bacon. The speeches of Essex and Sussex are evidently portions of the *Device* which

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SITY



Bacon prepared for Essex in 1595. The *Orations* at Gray's Inn Revels, though not published till 1688, are admittedly the six speeches composed by Bacon for the revels of 1594. The *Essays* can only have been the ten short essays which were published in 1597. *Asmund and Cornelia*, from the way in which it is connected with the name of Bacon in the margin, would appear to have been some abortive attempt of Bacon's. As to the *Isle of Dogs*, we know from Henslowe's Diary that Nash was writing it on the 14th of May, 1597, and we know from the records of the Privy Council that before the 15th of the following August, he had been committed to the Fleet for some 'seditious and sclaunderous matter,' which the Privy Council had detected in the play, and which may have been submitted to Bacon as Counsel-Extraordinary to the Queen. *Leicester's Commonwealth* charged Leicester with the murder of the father of Essex, it would naturally be submitted to Bacon for his advice, and, as we shall see, Bacon told his friend that his father had merely 'paid tribute to nature.' With these exceptions all the compositions enumerated in the table of contents would seem to be represented as the works of Bacon. Even the *Isle of Dogs* and *Leicester's Commonwealth* may not have been the original pieces but copies of the opinions which Bacon wrote upon them.

The title-page of the manuscript volume is literally *tatooed* with scribblings, among which there are to be found a quotation from the *Rape of Lucrece*; the anomalous word 'honorificabilitudino' which occurs in *Love's Labour's Lost*; the name of Bacon's brother Anthony, with the words 'comfort and consorte'; the word 'Baco' in close connexion with *Asmund and Cornelia*; and the words 'Shakespeare' and 'William Shakespeare,' and fragments of the word 'Shakespeare,' some eight or nine times repeated in immediate connexion with the name of Bacon.



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Unfortunately there is an *hiatus maxime deflendus* in the Papers. The *Orations*, the *Essays*, and the *Plays*, together with *Asmund and Cornelia* and the fragment of *The Isle of Dogs* have been abstracted from the pacquet ; and we must form some hypothesis to account for their abstraction. The play of Nash must have been published between the 14th of May and the 13th of August, 1597, and the collection could not have been made before the publication. *Richard the Second* was registered on the 29th of August 1597, and *Richard the Third* was registered on the 20th of the following October ; and if Bacon was their author he might well have been alarmed by the imprisonment of Nash, and this would account at once for their abstraction from the pacquet, and for their publication as anonymous productions. In any case the plays only existed in manuscript in 1597, and we may safely conclude that that they were abstracted from the bundle for the printer. The two plays were reprinted in 1598 with the name of 'William Shake-speare' as their author ; and as this was the first time that the name of Shakespeare was published in connexion with the plays, a Baconian might suggest that the scribblings indicate a deliberation as to whether the name which had been attached to the poems in 1593 and 1594 could with safety be attached to the plays in 1598.

The Northumberland Papers not only supply indications of the authorship of *Richard the Second* and *Richard the Third*, but in 'The Praise of the Worthiest Virtue,' they give the germ of *Julius Caesar*. This will be considered in the text ; and in the meanwhile we may inquire how it was that the Northumberland Papers found their way into Northumberland House.

Bacon was in the habit of presenting his friends with manuscript copies of his works. We know from the dedication of the first edition of his *Essays* that those 'frag-

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ments of his conceits' had been extensively circulated. He writes to Mountjoy that in tossing over his papers he found something that Mountjoy might like—in all probability *The Colours of Good and Evil* which in 1597 he dedicated to that lord. He submitted his characters of Elizabeth and of Julius Caesar to Matthew, and he states that he had communicated part of them to others. Of these others Northumberland probably was one. In a letter to the Earl, written a few days before the death of Elizabeth, Bacon writes: 'I am witness to myself, that there hath been covered in my mind a long time a seed of affection and zeal towards your lordship, sown by the estimation of your virtues, and your particular honours and favours to my brother deceased, and myself'; and in a second letter to the Earl, written immediately after the accession of James, he offers to draft a proclamation for the King, and speaks of himself as 'one of whose style and pen' Northumberland 'had some opinion.' What then is more likely than that Northumberland had formed his opinion of Bacon's style and pen from the Papers which have been discovered in Northumberland House? They not only gave a sample of his style, but they supplied the great noble with a proof of his devotion to that Worthiest Person the Queen. This surmise derives support from the fact that a manuscript book containing the *Essays* and the *Discourses* 'In Praise of the Worthiest Person' and 'In Praise of The Worthiest Power' found their way into the house of the Earl of Oxford who was the son-in-law of Burghley and the father of Lady Elizabeth Vere, whom Bacon's uncle offered in marriage to Bacon's friend in 1590. In fine, having regard to Bacon's general habit and the circumstances of the case, we may safely conclude that it was Bacon himself who communicates the copies of his works both to Northumberland and Oxford.



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by speech, by writing, and by all the means I could devise; for I did as plainly see his overthrow chained, as it were, by destiny to that journey, as it is possible for any man to ground a judgment upon future contingents.'

Unfortunately every word of this apology can be shown to be untrue. Following the example of Cicero and Pliny, Bacon kept copies of all his important letters, and in his works we may read a correspondence with Essex extending over the years 1596, 1597, 1598, and 1599 which gives the lie to everything he said in 1604. In October 1596 he wrote to Essex recommending him to pursue a policy of 'obsequious kindness' towards the Queen, and begging him not to 'judge of the whole play by the first act.' In 1597 he writes that he had ever found Essex to be his 'good lord and true friend,' and asks him to exercise his influence with the Queen in his behalf. In 1598 he writes two '*Letters of Advice*' to the Earl 'touching Irish affairs, considering them as they might concern his lordship.' In the first of these letters he begs that his lordship would 'secure him touching the privateness of what he wrote,' and he states that for various reasons he was moved to think that the Irish affair was 'one of the aptest particulars that had come, or could come, upon the stage for his lordship to purchase honour upon.' In the second letter of 1598, 'written before the Earl was nominated to the charge of Ireland,' Bacon in answer to 'the advertisements which his lordship had imparted to him touching the state of Ireland,' gives it as his opinion that 'if his lordship lent his reputation in this case,' it would 'win him a great deal of honour gratis.' But of these letters of advice by far the most important is that which Bacon wrote to Essex 'immediately before his going into Ireland' in March 1599. He writes:—'Her Majesty, known to be one of the most judicious in discerning of spirits that ever governed, hath made choice of you

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merely out of her royal judgment (her affection inclining rather to continue your attendance) into whose hand and trust to put the command and conduct of so great forces; the gathering of so great charge; the execution of so many counsels; the redeeming of the defaults of so many former governors; the clearing of the glory of her so many happy years' reign, only in this part eclipsed.' The end of the war in Ireland, he said, was 'to replant and refound the policy of that nation, to which nothing is wanting but a just and civil government.' The father of Essex had commanded an expedition to Ireland in 1573, where he died in 1576; and accordingly Bacon remarks: 'The design doth descend unto you from your noble father who lost his life in that action, though he paid tribute to nature, and not to fortune.' And as he commenced his letter by assuring his patron that 'some good spirit led his pen to presage his success,' so he concludes his letter by the expression of a confident hope that his lordship would be 'as fatal a captain to this war as Africanus was to the war of Carthage, after that both his uncle and father had lost their lives in Spain.'

A still more extraordinary contradiction is to be noted. In his *Apology* Bacon says to Devonshire: 'And because I would omit no argument, I remember I stood also upon the difficulty of the action, setting before him out of histories that the Irish was such an enemy as the ancient Gauls, or Britons, or Germans were'—enemies 'which placed their felicity only in liberty, and the sharpness of their sword, and had the natural elemental advantages of woods, and bogs, and hardness of bodies'; and 'I concluded,' says the *Apologist*, 'that going over with such expectation as he did, and through the churlishness of the enterprise not like to answer it, would mightily diminish his reputation.' Strange to say, the considerations which Bacon in his *Apology* says he pressed on Essex in order to deter him from his Irish

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enterprise, are the very considerations which in his *Letters of Advice* he urges as calculated to enhance its glory. In the last of the letters he says, 'If any man be of opinion that the nature of the enemy doth extenuate the honour of the service, being but a rebel and a savage, I differ from him; for I see the justest triumphs that the Romans in their greatness did obtain, and that whereof the Emperors in their styles took addition and denomination, were of such an enemy as this, that is, people barbarous and not reduced to civility, magnifying a kind of lawless liberty and prodigal of life, hardened in body, fortified in woods and bogs, and placing both justice and felicity in the sharpness of their swords; such were the Germans, and ancient Britons, and divers others; upon which kind of people, whether the victory were a conquest or a reconquest upon a rebellion or revolt, it makes no difference, that ever I could find, in honour.'

Bacon remarks in the *Advancement* that 'Letters bring things home, and represent them more to the life, than either Annals or Lives.' His Letters of Advice to Essex, which are printed in every edition of his works, afford a remarkable illustration of the justice of this remark.

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## NOTE K

*Of Shakespeare's Knowledge of Ireland.*

ACCORDING to the *Natural History*, 'No instrument hath the sound so melting and prolonged as the Irish Harp (s. 223), and Bacon would seem to have been fascinated by its wail. In an undated letter to Pearce, the secretary of the Lord Deputy of the day, he asks for information about Ireland, and having expressed his anxiety to understand how things pass in that kingdom, he adds: 'this is not merely curiosity, for I have ever, I know not by what instinct, wished well to that unpolished part of the crown.' How well he wished the country is patent in his writings. In the *Considerations* which he addressed to Elizabeth, he showed himself so far in advance of his times that he recommended the toleration of Religion, the endowment of the University, and the establishment of local Courts of Justice. In the *Considerations* which he addressed to King James he recommended the great Plantation which was foreshadowed by Shakespeare when he represents King Richard as determined 'to supplant those rough rug-headed kerns.' Even after his fall, he was constantly pressing upon Buckingham the necessity of keeping his eye on Ireland. The Poet, like the Statesman, exhibited a minute knowledge of the Island. In *Hamlet* the Prince of Denmark swears

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by the Irish saint. In *The Comedy of Errors* Dromio of Syracuse is acquainted with the Irish bogs. In *As You Like It* Rosalind declares that she was 'never so berimed since Pythagoras' time, that she was an Irish rat'; and for the barking of 'the wolves of Syria' in the tale of Lodge on which the play was founded, she substitutes the howling of the Irish wolf. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Ford declares that he would sooner trust an Irishman with his *aqua vitae* bottle than a woman with herself. In *Henry the Fourth* Hotspur protests that he would sooner hear 'Lady my Brach howl in Irish' than listen to Lady Mortimer when she sang in Welsh. In *Henry the Fifth* Macmorris presents us with a specimen of the Irish brogue; the Dauphin laughs at Orleans for riding like an Irish kern; and the Chorus predicts the triumph of Essex over the Irish rebels. In *Henry the Sixth* Beaufort urges York to proceed against 'the uncivil kerns of Ireland'; York proposes to 'nourish a mighty band in Ireland' in order 'to raise a storm in England'; and the soldier who proclaims Edward the Fourth displays a lawyer's knowledge of the Royal style when he proclaims him 'King of England and France and Lord of Ireland.' Finally, in *Henry the Eighth* Griffith's character of Wolsey is the mere versification of a passage in Campion's History of Ireland, and the dramatist talks as familiarly of Kildare's attainder, and the policy of Wolsey in sending Surrey to Ireland, as if he had been the successor of Wolsey as the Lord Chancellor of England.

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